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CITATIONS:

Bluebook 22nd ed.
Hannah Arendt, Origins of Totalitarianism (2nd ed. 1958).

ALWD 7th ed.
Hannah Arendt. Origins of Totalitarianism (2).

APA 7th ed.
Arendt, H. (2). Origins of Totalitarianism. New York, Meridian Book, Inc.

Chicago 18th ed.
Arendt Hannah. Origins of Totalitarianism. New York, Meridian Book, Inc.

McGill Guide 10th ed.
Hannah Arendt, Origins of Totalitarianism, 2nd ed. (New York: Meridian Book, Inc., 1958)

AGLC 4th ed.
Hannah Arendt, Origins of Totalitarianism (Meridian Book, Inc., 2

MLA 9th ed.
Arendt, Hannah. Origins of Totalitarianism. New York, Meridian Book, Inc. HeinOnline.

OSCOLA 4th ed.
Arendt, Hannah. Origins of Totalitarianism. New York, Meridian Book, Inc.

Date Downloaded: Wed Jun 3 16:12:58 2026

Source: https://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.beal/ogsotrm0001&id=1

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The Origins of

Totalitarianism

The Origins of Totalitarianism

by HANNAH ARENDT

MERIDIAN BOOKS, INC. NEW YORK

Meridian Books Edition first published October 1958
First printing September 1958

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Reprinted by arrangement with Harcourt, Brace and Company

Library of Congress Catalogue Card Number: 58-11927

Manufactured in the United States of America

TO HEINRICH BLÜCHER

Weder dem Vergangenen anheimfallen noch dem Zukünftigen. Es kommt darauf an, ganz gegenwärtig zu sein. KARL JASPERS

Preface to the First Edition

TWO WORLD WARS in one generation, separated by an uninterrupted chain of local wars and revolutions, followed by no peace treaty for the vanquished and no respite for the victor, have ended in the anticipation of a third World War between the two remaining world powers. This moment of anticipation is like the calm that settles after all hopes have died. We no longer hope for an eventual restoration of the old world order with all its traditions, or for the reintegration of the masses of five continents who have been thrown into a chaos produced by the violence of wars and revolutions and the growing decay of all that has still been spared. Under the most diverse conditions and disparate circumstances, we watch the development of the same phenomena—homelessness on an unprecedented scale, rootlessness to an unprecedented depth.

Never has our future been more unpredictable, never have we depended so much on political forces that cannot be trusted to follow the rules of common sense and self-interest—forces that look like sheer insanity, if judged by the standards of other centuries. It is as though mankind had divided itself between those who believe in human omnipotence (who think that everything is possible if one knows how to organize masses for it) and those for whom powerlessness has become the major experience of their lives.

On the level of historical insight and political thought there prevails an ill-defined, general agreement that the essential structure of all civilizations is at the breaking point. Although it may seem better preserved in some parts of the world than in others, it can nowhere provide the guidance to the possibilities of the century, or an adequate response to its horrors. Desperate hope and desperate fear often seem closer to the center of such events than balanced judgment and measured insight. The central events of our time are not less effectively forgotten by those committed to a belief in an unavoidable doom, than by those who have given themselves up to reckless optimism.

This book has been written against a background of both reckless optimism and reckless despair. It holds that Progress and Doom are two sides of the same medal; that both are articles of superstition, not of faith. It was

written out of the conviction that it should be possible to discover the hidden mechanics by which all traditional elements of our political and spiritual world were dissolved into a conglomeration where everything seems to have lost specific value, and has become unrecognizable for human comprehension, unusable for human purpose. To yield to the mere process of disintegration has become an irresistible temptation, not only because it has assumed the spurious grandeur of "historical necessity," but also because everything outside it has begun to appear lifeless, bloodless, meaningless, and unreal.

The conviction that everything that happens on earth must be comprehensible to man can lead to interpreting history by commonplaces. Comprehension does not mean denying the outrageous, deducing the unprecedented from precedents, or explaining phenomena by such analogies and generalities that the impact of reality and the shock of experience are no longer felt. It means, rather, examining and bearing consciously the burden which our century has placed on us—neither denying its existence nor submitting meekly to its weight. Comprehension, in short, means the unpremeditated, attentive facing up to, and resisting of, reality—whatever it may be.

In this sense, it must be possible to face and understand the outrageous fact that so small (and, in world politics, so unimportant) a phenomenon as the Jewish question and antisemitism could become the catalytic agent for first, the Nazi movement, then a world war, and finally the establishment of death factories. Or, the grotesque disparity between cause and effect which introduced the era of imperialism, when economic difficulties led, in a few decades, to a profound transformation of political conditions all over the world. Or, the curious contradiction between the totalitarian movements' avowed cynical "realism" and their conspicuous disdain of the whole texture of reality. Or, the irritating incompatibility between the actual power of modern man (greater than ever before, great to the point where he might challenge the very existence of his own universe) and the impotence of modern men to live in, and understand the sense of, a world which their own strength has established.

The totalitarian attempt at global conquest and total domination has been the destructive way out of all impasses. Its victory may coincide with the destruction of humanity; wherever it has ruled, it has begun to destroy the essence of man. Yet to turn our backs on the destructive forces of the century is of little avail.

The trouble is that our period has so strangely intertwined the good with the bad that without the imperialists' "expansion for expansion's sake," the world might never have become one; without the bourgeoisie's political device of "power for power's sake," the extent of human strength might never have been discovered; without the fictitious world of totalitarian movements, in which with unparalleled clarity the essential uncertainties of our time have been spelled out, we might have been driven to our doom without ever becoming aware of what has been happening.

And if it is true that in the final stages of totalitarianism an absolute evil

appears (absolute because it can no longer be deduced from humanly comprehensible motives), it is also true that without it we might never have known the truly radical nature of Evil.

Antisemitism (not merely the hatred of Jews), imperialism (not merely conquest), totalitarianism (not merely dictatorship)—one after the other, one more brutally than the other, have demonstrated that human dignity needs a new guarantee which can be found only in a new political principle, in a new law on earth, whose validity this time must comprehend the whole of humanity while its power must remain strictly limited, rooted in and controlled by newly defined territorial entities.

We can no longer afford to take that which was good in the past and simply call it our heritage, to discard the bad and simply think of it as a dead load which by itself time will bury in oblivion. The subterranean stream of Western history has finally come to the surface and usurped the dignity of our tradition. This is the reality in which we live. And this is why all efforts to escape from the grimness of the present into nostalgia for a still intact past, or into the anticipated oblivion of a better future, are vain.

Summer, 1950

Preface to the Second Enlarged Edition

SINCE 1951, when this book first appeared, only one event happened that had a direct bearing upon our understanding of totalitarianism and total domination as a novel form of government. This is not Stalin's death, nor even the succession crisis in Russia and the satellite countries, but the Hungarian revolution—the first and yet unique instance of a people's uprising against total domination. At this moment, hardly two years after the uprising, no one can tell whether this was only the last and most desperate flare-up of a spirit which, since 1789, has manifested itself in the series of European revolutions, or if it contains the germ of something new which will have consequences of its own. In either case, the event itself is important enough to require a re-examination of what we know, or think we know, about totalitarianism. The reader will find in this new edition a last chapter, in the form of an Epilogue, where I have tried to bring the older story up to date. However, the reader should bear in mind that developments of the year 1958 have not been taken into account, with the result that the partial restalinization in Soviet Russia and the satellite countries is hinted at as a strong probability, but not told and analyzed as an accomplished fact.

This is not the only addition. As sometimes happens in such matters, there were certain insights of a more general and theoretical nature which now appear to me to grow directly out of the analysis of the elements of total domination in the third part of the book, but which I did not possess when I finished the original manuscript in 1949. These are now incorporated in Chapter XIII, "Ideology and Terror," of the present edition and they replace the rather inconclusive "Concluding Remarks" that closed the original edition, some of which, however, have been shifted to other chapters.

These changes are not revisions. It is true that in the present edition, even apart from the two new chapters, Part III on Totalitarianism and the last chapters of Part II on Imperialism (dealing with such pretotalitarian phenomena as statelessness and the transformation of parties into movements) are considerably enlarged, while Part I on Antisemitism and the chapters 5 to 8 on Imperialism have remained untouched. But the changes are technical additions and replacements which do not alter either the analysis or argument of the original text. They were necessary because so much documentary and other source material on the Hitler regime had become accessible years after this book was finished. Thus I knew the Nuremberg documents only in part and only in English translations, and many books, pamphlets and magazines published in Germany during

the war were not available in this country. Additions and replacements, therefore, concern mainly quotations in text and footnotes where I can now use original instead of secondary sources.

However, what I tried to do for source material, I could not do for the huge literature of recent years on Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia. Not even all of the more important contributions are mentioned. While I sincerely regret this omission, I left out of account, without regret, the rather voluminous literature of memoirs published by Nazi and other German functionaries after the end of the war. The dishonesty of this kind of apologetics is obvious and embarrassing but understandable, whereas the lack of comprehension they display of what actually happened, as well as of the roles the authors themselves played in the course of events, is truly astonishing.

For kind permission to peruse and quote archival material, I thank the Hoover Library in Stanford, California, the Centre de Documentation Juive in Paris, and the Yiddish Scientific Institute in New York. Documents in the Nuremberg Trials are quoted with their Nuremberg File Number; other documents are referred to with indication of their present location and archival number.

The two new chapters of this edition appeared before in the *Review of Politics,* July 1953, under the title, "Ideology and Terror, a Novel Form of Government," and in the *Journal of Politics,* February 1958, under the title, "Totalitarian Imperialism: Reflections on the Hungarian Revolution."

The additions and enlargements of the present edition, with the exception of the analysis of the Hungarian revolution, appeared first in the German edition published in 1955. Therefore they had to be translated and incorporated into the English edition. This difficult job of editing and translating was done by Mrs. Therese Pol, to whom I am greatly indebted.

Hannah Arendt

New York, April, 1958

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PART ONE

Antisemitism

This is a remarkable century which opened with the Revolution and ended with the Affaire! *Perhaps it will be called the century of rubbish.*

ROGER MARTIN DU GARD

CHAPTER ONE: Antisemitism as an Outrage to Common Sense

MANY STILL consider it an accident that Nazi ideology centered around antisemitism and that Nazi policy, consistently and uncompromisingly, aimed at the persecution and finally the extermination of the Jews. Only the horror of the final catastrophe, and even more the homelessness and uprootedness of the survivors, made the "Jewish question" so prominent in our everyday political life. What the Nazis themselves claimed to be their chief discovery—the role of the Jewish people in world politics—and their chief interest—persecution of Jews all over the world—have been regarded by public opinion as a pretext for winning the masses or an interesting device of demagogy.

The failure to take seriously what the Nazis themselves said is comprehensible enough. There is hardly an aspect of contemporary history more irritating and mystifying than the fact that of all the great unsolved political questions of our century, it should have been this seemingly small and unimportant Jewish problem that had the dubious honor of setting the whole infernal machine in motion. Such discrepancies between cause and effect outrage our common sense, to say nothing of the historian's sense of balance and harmony. Compared with the events themselves, all explanations of antisemitism look as if they had been hastily and hazardously contrived, to cover up an issue which so gravely threatens our sense of proportion and our hope for sanity.

One of these hasty explanations has been the identification of antisemitism with rampant nationalism and its xenophobic outbursts. Unfortunately, the fact is that modern antisemitism grew in proportion as traditional nationalism declined, and reached its climax at the exact moment when the European system of nation-states and its precarious balance of power crashed.

It has already been noticed that the Nazis were not simple nationalists. Their nationalist propaganda was directed toward their fellow-travelers and not their convinced members; the latter, on the contrary, were never allowed to lose sight of a consistently supranational approach to politics. Nazi "nationalism" had more than one aspect in common with the recent nationalistic propaganda in the Soviet Union, which is also used only to feed the prejudices of the masses. The Nazis had a genuine and never re-

voked contempt for the narrowness of nationalism, the provincialism of the nation-state, and they repeated time and again that their "movement," international in scope like the Bolshevik movement, was more important to them than any state, which would necessarily be bound to a specific territory. And not only the Nazis, but fifty years of antisemitic history, stand as evidence against the identification of antisemitism with nationalism. The first antisemitic parties in the last decades of the nineteenth century were also among the first that banded together internationally. From the very beginning, they called international congresses and were concerned with a co-ordination of international, or at least inter-European, activities.

General trends, like the coincident decline of the nation-state and the growth of antisemitism, can hardly ever be explained satisfactorily by one reason or by one cause alone. The historian is in most such cases confronted with a very complex historical situation where he is almost at liberty, and that means at a loss, to isolate one factor as the "spirit of the time." There are, however, a few helpful general rules. Foremost among them for our purpose is Tocqueville's great discovery (in *L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution,* Book II, chap. 1) of the motives for the violent hatred felt by the French masses for the aristocracy at the outbreak of the Revolution —a hatred which stimulated Burke to remark that the revolution was more concerned with "the condition of a gentleman" than with the institution of a king. According to Tocqueville, the French people hated aristocrats about to lose their power more than it had ever hated them before, precisely because their rapid loss of real power was not accompanied by any considerable decline in their fortunes. As long as the aristocracy held vast powers of jurisdiction, they were not only tolerated but respected. When noblemen lost their privileges, among others the privilege to exploit and oppress, the people felt them to be parasites, without any real function in the rule of the country. In other words, neither oppression nor exploitation as such is ever the main cause for resentment; wealth without visible function is much more intolerable because nobody can understand why it should be tolerated.

Antisemitism reached its climax when Jews had similarly lost their public functions and their influence, and were left with nothing but their wealth. When Hitler came to power, the German banks were already almost *judenrein* (and it was here that Jews had held key positions for more than a hundred years) and German Jewry as a whole, after a long steady growth in social status and numbers, was declining so rapidly that statisticians predicted its disappearance in a few decades. Statistics, it is true, do not necessarily point to real historical processes; yet it is noteworthy that to a statistician Nazi persecution and extermination could look like a senseless acceleration of a process which would probably have come about in any case.

The same holds true for nearly all Western European countries. The Dreyfus Affair exploded not under the Second Empire, when French Jewry was at the height of its prosperity and influence, but under the Third Re-

public when Jews had all but vanished from important positions (though not from the political scene). Austrian antisemitism became violent not under the reign of Metternich and Franz Joseph, but in the postwar Austrian Republic when it was perfectly obvious that hardly any other group had suffered the same loss of influence and prestige through the disappearance of the Hapsburg monarchy.

Persecution of powerless or power-losing groups may not be a very pleasant spectacle, but it does not spring from human meanness alone. What makes men obey or tolerate real power and, on the other hand, hate people who have wealth without power, is the rational instinct that power has a certain function and is of some general use. Even exploitation and oppression still make society work and establish some kind of order. Only wealth without power or aloofness without a policy are felt to be parasitical, useless, revolting, because such conditions cut all the threads which tie men together. Wealth which does not exploit lacks even the relationship which exists between exploiter and exploited; aloofness without policy does not imply even the minimum concern of the oppressor for the oppressed.

The general decline of Western and Central European Jewry, however, constitutes merely the atmosphere in which the subsequent events took place. The decline itself explains them as little as the mere loss of power by the aristocracy would explain the French Revolution. To be aware of such general rules is important only in order to refute those recommendations of common sense which lead us to believe that violent hatred or sudden rebellion spring necessarily from great power and great abuses, and that consequently organized hatred of the Jews cannot but be a reaction to their importance and power.

More serious, because it appeals to much better people, is another common-sense fallacy: the Jews, because they were an entirely powerless group caught up in the general and insoluble conflicts of the time, could be blamed for them and finally be made to appear the hidden authors of all evil. The best illustration—and the best refutation—of this explanation, dear to the hearts of many liberals, is in a joke which was told after the first World War. An antisemite claimed that the Jews had caused the war; the reply was: Yes, the Jews and the bicyclists. Why the bicyclists? asks the one. Why the Jews? asks the other.

The theory that the Jews are always the scapegoat implies that the scapegoat might have been anyone else as well. It upholds the perfect innocence of the victim, an innocence which insinuates not only that no evil was done but that nothing at all was done which might possibly have a connection with the issue at stake. It is true that the scapegoat theory in its purely arbitrary form never appears in print. Whenever, however, its adherents painstakingly try to explain why a specific scapegoat was so well suited to his role, they show that they have left the theory behind them and have got themselves involved in the usual historical research—where nothing is ever discovered except that history is made by many groups and that for certain reasons one group was singled out. The so-called scapegoat necessarily

ceases to be the innocent victim whom the world blames for all its sins and through whom it wishes to escape punishment; it becomes one group of people among other groups, all of which are involved in the business of this world. And it does not simply cease to be coresponsible because it became the victim of the world's injustice and cruelty.

Until recently the inner inconsistency of the scapegoat theory was sufficient reason to discard it as one of many theories which are motivated by escapism. But the rise of terror as a major weapon of government has lent it a credibility greater than it ever had before.

A fundamental difference between modern dictatorships and all other tyrannies of the past is that terror is no longer used as a means to exterminate and frighten opponents, but as an instrument to rule masses of people who are perfectly obedient. Terror as we know it today strikes without any preliminary provocation, its victims are innocent even from the point of view of the persecutor. This was the case in Nazi Germany when full terror was directed against Jews, *i.e.*, against people with certain common characteristics which were independent of their specific behavior. In Soviet Russia the situation is more confused, but the facts, unfortunately, are only too obvious. On the one hand, the Bolshevik system, unlike the Nazi, never admitted theoretically that it could practice terror against innocent people, and though in view of certain practices this may look like hypocrisy, it makes quite a difference. Russian practice, on the other hand, is even more "advanced" than the German in one respect: arbitrariness of terror is not even limited by racial differentiation, while the old class categories have long since been discarded, so that anybody in Russia may suddenly become a victim of the police terror. We are not concerned here with the ultimate consequence of rule by terror—namely, that nobody, not even the executors, can ever be free of fear; in our context we are dealing merely with the arbitrariness by which victims are chosen, and for this it is decisive that they are objectively innocent, that they are chosen regardless of what they may or may not have done.

At first glance this may look like a belated confirmation of the old scapegoat theory, and it is true that the victim of modern terror does show all the characteristics of the scapegoat: he is objectively and absolutely innocent because nothing he did or omitted to do matters or has any connection with his fate.

There is, therefore, a temptation to return to an explanation which automatically discharges the victim of responsibility: it seems quite adequate to a reality in which nothing strikes us more forcefully than the utter innocence of the individual caught in the horror machine and his utter inability to change his fate. Terror, however, is only in the last instance of its development a mere form of government. In order to establish a totalitarian regime, terror must be presented as an instrument for carrying out a specific ideology; and that ideology must have won the adherence of many, and even a majority, before terror can be stabilized. The point for the historian is that the Jews, before becoming the main victims of modern terror, were the center of Nazi

ideology. And an ideology which has to persuade and mobilize people cannot choose its victim arbitrarily. In other words, if a patent forgery like the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" is believed by so many people that it can become the text of a whole political movement, the task of the historian is no longer to discover a forgery. Certainly it is not to invent explanations which dismiss the chief political and historical fact of the matter: that the forgery is being believed. This fact is more important than the (historically speaking, secondary) circumstance that it is forgery.

The scapegoat explanation therefore remains one of the principal attempts to escape the seriousness of antisemitism and the significance of the fact that the Jews were driven into the storm center of events. Equally widespread is the opposite doctrine of an "eternal antisemitism" in which Jew-hatred is a normal and natural reaction to which history gives only more or less opportunity. Outbursts need no special explanation because they are natural consequences of an eternal problem. That this doctrine was adopted by professional antisemites is a matter of course; it gives the best possible alibi for all horrors. If it is true that mankind has insisted on murdering Jews for more than two thousand years, then Jew-killing is a normal, and even human, occupation and Jew-hatred is justified beyond the need of argument.

The more surprising aspect of this explanation, the assumption of an eternal antisemitism, is that it has been adopted by a great many unbiased historians and by an even greater number of Jews. It is this odd coincidence which makes the theory so very dangerous and confusing. Its escapist basis is in both instances the same: just as antisemites understandably desire to escape responsibility for their deeds, so Jews, attacked and on the defensive, even more understandably do not wish under any circumstances to discuss their share of responsibility. In the case of Jewish, and frequently of Christian, adherents of this doctrine, however, the escapist tendencies of official apologetics are based upon more important and less rational motives.

The birth and growth of modern antisemitism has been accompanied by and interconnected with Jewish assimilation, the secularization and withering away of the old religious and spiritual values of Judaism. What actually happened was that great parts of the Jewish people were at the same time threatened by physical extinction from without and dissolution from within. In this situation, Jews concerned with the survival of their people would, in a curious desperate misinterpretation, hit on the consoling idea that antisemitism, after all, might be an excellent means for keeping the people together, so that the assumption of eternal antisemitism would even imply an eternal guarantee of Jewish existence. This superstition, a secularized travesty of the idea of eternity inherent in a faith in chosenness and a Messianic hope, has been strengthened through the fact that for many centuries the Jews experienced the Christian brand of hostility which was indeed a powerful agent of preservation, spiritually as well as politically. The Jews mistook modern anti-Christian antisemitism for the old religious Jew-hatred —and this all the more innocently because their assimilation had by-passed

Christianity in its religious and cultural aspect. Confronted with an obvious symptom of the decline of Christianity, they could therefore imagine in all ignorance that this was some revival of the so-called "Dark Ages." Ignorance or misunderstanding of their own past were partly responsible for their fatal underestimation of the actual and unprecedented dangers which lay ahead. But one should also bear in mind that lack of political ability and judgment have been caused by the very nature of Jewish history, the history of a people without a government, without a country, and without a language. Jewish history offers the extraordinary spectacle of a people, unique in this respect, which began its history with a well-defined concept of history and an almost conscious resolution to achieve a well-circumscribed plan on earth and then, without giving up this concept, avoided all political action for two thousand years. The result was that the political history of the Jewish people became even more dependent upon unforeseen, accidental factors than the history of other nations, so that the Jews stumbled from one role to the other and accepted responsibility for none.

In view of the final catastrophe, which brought the Jews so near to complete annihilation, the thesis of eternal antisemitism has become more dangerous than ever. Today it would absolve Jew-haters of crimes greater than anybody had ever believed possible. Antisemitism, far from being a mysterious guarantee of the survival of the Jewish people, has been clearly revealed as a threat of its extermination. Yet this explanation of antisemitism, like the scapegoat theory and for similar reasons, has outlived its refutation by reality. It stresses, after all, with different arguments but equal stubbornness, that complete and inhuman innocence which so strikingly characterizes victims of modern terror, and therefore seems confirmed by the events. It even has the advantage over the scapegoat theory that somehow it answers the uncomfortable question: Why the Jews of all people?—if only with the question begging reply: Eternal hostility.

It is quite remarkable that the only two doctrines which at least attempt to explain the political significance of the antisemitic movement deny all specific Jewish responsibility and refuse to discuss matters in specific historical terms. In this inherent negation of the significance of human behavior, they bear a terrible resemblance to those modern practices and forms of government which, by means of arbitrary terror, liquidate the very possibility of human activity. Somehow in the extermination camps Jews were murdered as if in accordance with the explanation these doctrines had given of why they were hated: regardless of what they had done or omitted to do, regardless of vice or virtue. Moreover, the murderers themselves, only obeying orders and proud of their passionless efficiency, uncannily resembled the "innocent" instruments of an inhuman impersonal course of events which the doctrine of eternal antisemitism had considered them to be.

Such common denominators between theory and practice are by themselves no indication of historical truth, although they are an indication of the "timely" character of such opinions and explain why they sound so

plausible to the multitude. The historian is concerned with them only insofar as they are themselves part of his history and because they stand in the way of his search for truth. Being a contemporary, he is as likely to succumb to their persuasive force as anybody else. Caution in handling generally accepted opinions that claim to explain whole trends of history is especially important for the historian of modern times, because the last century has produced an abundance of ideologies that pretend to be keys to history but are actually nothing but desperate efforts to escape responsibility.

Plato, in his famous fight against the ancient Sophists, discovered that their "universal art of enchanting the mind by arguments" (*Phaedrus* 261) had nothing to do with truth but aimed at opinions which by their very nature are changing, and which are valid only "at the time of the agreement and as long as the agreement lasts" (*Theaetetus* 172). He also discovered the very insecure position of truth in the world, for from "opinions comes persuasion and not from truth" (*Phaedrus* 260). The most striking difference between ancient and modern sophists is that the ancients were satisfied with a passing victory of the argument at the expense of truth, whereas the moderns want a more lasting victory at the expense of reality. In other words, one destroyed the dignity of human thought whereas the others destroy the dignity of human action. The old manipulators of logic were the concern of the philosopher, whereas the modern manipulators of facts stand in the way of the historian. For history itself is destroyed, and its comprehensibility—based upon the fact that it is enacted by men and therefore can be understood by men—is in danger, whenever facts are no longer held to be part and parcel of the past and present world, and are misused to prove this or that opinion.

There are, to be sure, few guides left through the labyrinth of inarticulate facts if opinions are discarded and tradition is no longer accepted as unquestionable. Such perplexities of historiography, however, are very minor consequences, considering the profound upheavals of our time and their effect upon the historical structures of Western mankind. Their immediate result has been to expose all those components of our history which up to now had been hidden from our view. This does not mean that what came crashing down in this crisis (perhaps the most profound crisis in Western history since the downfall of the Roman Empire) was mere façade, although many things have been revealed as façade that only a few decades ago we thought were indestructible essences.

The simultaneous decline of the European nation-state and growth of antisemitic movements, the coincident downfall of nationally organized Europe and the extermination of Jews, which was prepared for by the victory of antisemitism over all competing isms in the preceding struggle for persuasion of public opinion, have to be taken as a serious indication of the source of antisemitism. Modern antisemitism must be seen in the more general framework of the development of the nation-state, and at the same time its source must be found in certain aspects of Jewish history and specifically Jewish functions during the last centuries. If, in the final stage of disintegra-

tion, antisemitic slogans proved the most effective means of inspiring and organizing great masses of people for imperialist expansion and destruction of the old forms of government, then the previous history of the relationship between Jews and the state must contain elementary clues to the growing hostility between certain groups of society and the Jews. We shall show this development in the next chapter.

If, furthermore, the steady growth of the modern mob—that is, of the *déclassés* of all classes—produced leaders who, undisturbed by the question of whether the Jews were sufficiently important to be made the focus of a political ideology, repeatedly saw in them the "key to history" and the central cause of all evils, then the previous history of the relationship between Jews and society must contain the elementary indications of the hostile relationship between the mob and the Jews. We shall deal with the relationship between Jews and society in the third chapter.

The fourth chapter deals with the Dreyfus Affair, a kind of dress rehearsal for the performance of our own time. Because of the peculiar opportunity it offers of seeing, in a brief historical moment, the otherwise hidden potentialities of antisemitism as a major political weapon within the framework of nineteenth-century politics and its relatively well-balanced sanity, this case has been treated in full detail.

The following three chapters, to be sure, analyze only the preparatory elements, which were not fully realized until the decay of the nation-state and the development of imperialism reached the foreground of the political scene.

CHAPTER TWO: The Jews, the Nation-State, and the Birth of Antisemitism

1: *The Equivocalities of Emancipation and the Jewish State Banker*

AT THE height of its development in the nineteenth century, the nation-state granted its Jewish inhabitants equality of rights. Deeper, older, and more fateful contradictions are hidden behind the abstract and palpable inconsistency that Jews received their citizenship from governments which in the process of centuries had made nationality a prerequisite for citizenship and homogeneity of population the outstanding characteristic of the body politic.

The series of emancipation edicts which slowly and hesitantly followed the French edict of 1792 had been preceded and were accompanied by an equivocal attitude toward its Jewish inhabitants on the part of the nation-state. The breakdown of the feudal order had given rise to the new revolutionary concept of equality, according to which a "nation within the nation" could no longer be tolerated. Jewish restrictions and privileges had to be abolished together with all other special rights and liberties. This growth of equality, however, depended largely upon the growth of an independent state machine which, either as an enlightened despotism or as a constitutional government above all classes and parties, could, in splendid isolation, function, rule, and represent the interests of the nation as a whole. Therefore, beginning with the late seventeenth century, an unprecedented need arose for state credit and a new expansion of the state's sphere of economic and business interest, while no group among the European populations was prepared to grant credit to the state or take an active part in the development of state business. It was only natural that the Jews, with their age-old experience as moneylenders and their connections with European nobility—to whom they frequently owed local protection and for whom they used to handle financial matters—would be called upon for help; it was clearly in the interest of the new state business to grant the Jews certain privileges and to treat them as a separate group. Under no circumstances could the state afford to see them wholly assimilated into the rest of the population, which refused credit to the state, was reluctant to enter and to

develop businesses owned by the state, and followed the routine pattern of private capitalistic enterprise.

Emancipation of the Jews, therefore, as granted by the national state system in Europe during the nineteenth century, had a double origin and an ever-present equivocal meaning. On the one hand it was due to the political and legal structure of a new body politic which could function only under the conditions of political and legal equality. Governments, for their own sake, had to iron out the inequalities of the old order as completely and as quickly as possible. On the other hand, it was the clear result of a gradual extension of specific Jewish privileges, granted originally only to individuals, then through them to a small group of well-to-do Jews; only when this limited group could no longer handle by themselves the ever-growing demands of state business, were these privileges finally extended to the whole of Western and Central European Jewry.[1]

Thus, at the same time and in the same countries, emancipation meant equality *and* privileges, the destruction of the old Jewish community autonomy *and* the conscious preservation of the Jews as a separate group in society, the abolition of special restrictions and special rights *and* the extension of such rights to a growing group of individuals. Equality of condition for all nationals had become the premise of the new body politic, and while this equality had actually been carried out at least to the extent of depriving the old ruling classes of their privilege to govern and the old oppressed classes of their right to be protected, the process coincided with the birth of the class society which again separated the nationals, economically and socially, as efficiently as the old regime. Equality of condition, as the Jacobins had understood it in the French Revolution, became a reality only in America, whereas on the European continent it was at once replaced by a mere formal equality before the law.

The fundamental contradiction between a political body based on equality before the law and a society based on the inequality of the class system prevented the development of functioning republics as well as the birth of a new political hierarchy. An insurmountable inequality of social condition,

[1] To the modern historian rights and liberties granted the court Jews during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries may appear to be only the forerunners of equality: court Jews could live wherever they liked, they were permitted to travel freely within the realm of their sovereign, they were allowed to bear arms and had rights to special protection from local authorities. Actually these court Jews, characteristically called *Generalprivilegierte Juden* in Prussia, not only enjoyed better living conditions than their fellow Jews who still lived under almost medieval restrictions, but they were better off than their non-Jewish neighbors. Their standard of living was much higher than that of the contemporary middle class, their privileges in most cases were greater than those granted to the merchants. Nor did this situation escape the attention of their contemporaries. Christian Wilhelm Dohm, the outstanding advocate of Jewish emancipation in eighteenth-century Prussia, complained of the practice, in force since the time of Frederick William I, which granted rich Jews "all sorts of favors and support" often "at the expense of, and with neglect of diligent legal [that is, non-Jewish] citizens." In *Denkwürdigkeiten meiner Zeit,* Lemgo, 1814-1819, IV, 487.

the fact that class membership on the continent was bestowed upon the individual and, up to the first World War, almost guaranteed to him by birth, could nevertheless exist side by side with political equality. Only politically backward countries, like Germany, had retained a few feudal remnants. There members of the aristocracy, which on the whole was well on its way to transforming itself into a class, had a privileged political status, and thus could preserve as a group a certain special relationship to the state. But these were remnants. The fully developed class system meant invariably that the status of the individual was defined by his membership in his own class and his relationship to another, and not by his position in the state or within its machinery.

The only exceptions to this general rule were the Jews. They did not form a class of their own and they did not belong to any of the classes in their countries. As a group, they were neither workers, middle-class people, landholders, nor peasants. Their wealth seemed to make them part of the middle class, but they did not share in its capitalist development; they were scarcely represented in industrial enterprise and if, in the last stages of their history in Europe, they became employers on a large scale, they employed white-collar personnel and not workers. In other words, although their status was defined through their being Jews, it was not defined through their relationship to another class. Their special protection from the state (whether in the old form of open privileges, or a special emancipation edict which no other group needed and which frequently had to be reinforced against the hostility of society) and their special services to the governments prevented their submersion in the class system as well as their own establishment as a class.[2] Whenever, therefore, they were admitted to and entered society, they became a well-defined, self-preserving group within one of the classes, the aristocracy or the bourgeoisie.

There is no doubt that the nation-state's interest in preserving the Jews as a special group and preventing their assimilation into class society coincided with the Jewish interest in self-preservation and group survival. It is also more than probable that without this coincidence the governments' attempts would have been in vain; the powerful trends toward equalization of all citizens from the side of the state and incorporation of each individual into a class from the side of society, both clearly implying complete Jewish assimilation, could be frustrated only through a combination of government intervention and voluntary co-operation. Official policies for the Jews were, after all, not always so consistent and unwavering as we may believe if we consider only the final results.[3] It is indeed surprising to see how consistently

[2] Jacob Lestschinsky, in an early discussion of the Jewish problem, pointed out that Jews did not belong to any social class, and spoke of a *"Klasseneinschiebsel"* (in *Weltwirtschafts-Archiv*, 1929, Band 30, 123 ff.), but saw only the disadvantages of this situation in Eastern Europe, not its great advantages in Western and Central European countries.

[3] For example, under Frederick II after the Seven Years' War, a decided effort was made in Prussia to incorporate the Jews into a kind of mercantile system. The

Jews neglected their chances for normal capitalist enterprise and business.[4] But without the interests and practices of the governments, the Jews could hardly have preserved their group identity.

In contrast to all other groups, the Jews were defined and their position determined by the body politic. Since, however, this body politic had no other social reality, they were, socially speaking, in the void. Their social inequality was quite different from the inequality of the class system; it was again mainly the result of their relationship to the state, so that, in society, the very fact of being born a Jew would either mean that one was overprivileged—under special protection of the government—or underprivileged, lacking certain rights and opportunities which were withheld from the Jews in order to prevent their assimilation.

The schematic outline of the simultaneous rise and decline of the European nation-state system and European Jewry unfolds roughly in the following stages:

1. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries witnessed the slow development of nation-states under the tutelage of absolute monarchs. Individual Jews everywhere rose out of deep obscurity into the sometimes glamorous, and always influential, position of court Jews who financed state affairs and handled the financial transactions of their princes. This development affected the masses who continued to live in a more or less feudal order as little as it affected the Jewish people as a whole.

2. After the French Revolution, which abruptly changed political conditions on the whole European continent, nation-states in the modern sense emerged whose business transactions required a considerably larger amount of capital and credit than the court Jews had ever been asked to place at a

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older general *Juden-reglement* of 1750 was supplanted by a system of regular permits issued only to those inhabitants who invested a considerable part of their fortune in new manufacturing enterprises. But here, as everywhere else, such government attempts failed completely.

[4] Felix Priebatsch ("Die Judenpolitik des fürstlichen Absolutismus im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert," in *Forschungen und Versuche zur Geschichte des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit*, 1915) cites a typical example from the early eighteenth century: "When the mirror factory in Neuhaus, Lower Austria, which was subsidized by the administration, did not produce, the Jew Wertheimer gave the Emperor money to buy it. When asked to take over the factory he refused, stating that his time was taken up with his financial transactions."

See also Max Köhler, "Beiträge zur neueren jüdischen Wirtschaftsgeschichte. Die Juden in Halberstadt und Umgebung," in *Studien zur Geschichte der Wirtschaft und Geisteskultur*, 1927, Band 3.

In this tradition, which kept rich Jews from real positions of power in capitalism, is the fact that in 1911 the Paris Rothschilds sold their share in the oil wells of Baku to the Royal Shell group, after having been, with the exception of Rockefeller, the world's biggest petroleum tycoons. This incident is reported in Richard Lewinsohn, *Wie sie gross und reich wurden*, Berlin, 1927.

André Sayou's statement ("Les Juifs" in *Revue Economique Internationale*, 1932) in his polemic against Werner Sombart's identification of Jews with capitalist development, may be taken as a general rule: "The Rothschilds and other Israelites who were almost exclusively engaged in launching state loans and in the international movement of capital, did not try at all . . . to create great industries."

prince's disposal. Only the combined wealth of the wealthier strata of Western and Central European Jewry, which they entrusted to some prominent Jewish bankers for such purposes, could suffice to meet the new enlarged governmental needs. This period brought with it the granting of privileges, which up to then had been necessary only for court Jews, to the larger wealthy class, which had managed to settle in the more important urban and financial centers in the eighteenth century. Finally emancipation was granted in all full-fledged nation-states and withheld only in those countries where Jews, because of their numbers and the general backwardness of these regions, had not been able to organize themselves into a special separate group whose economic function was financial support of their government.

3. Since this intimate relationship between national government and Jews had rested on the indifference of the bourgeoisie to politics in general and state finance in particular, this period came to an end with the rise of imperialism at the end of the nineteenth century when capitalist business in the form of expansion could no longer be carried out without active political help and intervention by the state. Imperialism, on the other hand, undermined the very foundations of the nation-state and introduced into the European comity of nations the competitive spirit of business concerns. In the early decades of this development, Jews lost their exclusive position in state business to imperialistically minded businessmen; they declined in importance as a group, although individual Jews kept their influence as financial advisers and as inter-European middlemen. These Jews, however—in contrast to the nineteenth-century state bankers—had even less need of the Jewish community at large, notwithstanding its wealth, than the court Jews of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and therefore they frequently cut themselves off completely from the Jewish community. The Jewish communities were no longer financially organized, and although individual Jews in high positions remained representative of Jewry as a whole in the eyes of the Gentile world, there was little if any material reality behind this.

4. As a group, Western Jewry disintegrated together with the nation-state during the decades preceding the outbreak of the first World War. The rapid decline of Europe after the war found them already deprived of their former power, atomized into a herd of wealthy individuals. In an imperialist age, Jewish wealth had become insignificant; to a Europe with no sense of balance of power between its nations and of inter-European solidarity, the non-national, inter-European Jewish element became an object of universal hatred because of its useless wealth, and of contempt because of its lack of power.

The first governments to need regular income and secure finances were the absolute monarchies under which the nation-state came into being. Feudal princes and kings also had needed money, and even credit, but for specific purposes and temporary operations only; even in the sixteenth cen-

tury, when the Fuggers put their own credit at the disposal of the state, they were not yet thinking of establishing a special state credit. The absolute monarchs at first provided for their financial needs partly through the old method of war and looting, and partly through the new device of tax monopoly. This undermined the power and ruined the fortunes of the nobility without assuaging the growing hostility of the population.

For a long time the absolute monarchies looked about society for a class upon which to rely as securely as the feudal monarchy had upon the nobility. In France an incessant struggle between the guilds and the monarchy, which wanted to incorporate them into the state system, had been going on since the fifteenth century. The most interesting of these experiments were doubtless the rise of mercantilism and the attempts of the absolute state to get an absolute monopoly over national business and industry. The resulting disaster, and the bankruptcy brought about by the concerted resistance of the rising bourgeoisie, are sufficiently well known.[5]

Before the emancipation edicts, every princely household and every monarch in Europe already had a court Jew to handle financial business. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, these court Jews were always single individuals who had inter-European connections and inter-European credit at their disposal, but did not form an international financial entity.[6] Char-

[5] The influence, however, of mercantile experiments on future developments can hardly be overrated. France was the only country where the mercantile system was tried consistently and resulted in an early flourishing of manufactures which owed their existence to state interference; she never quite recovered from the experience. In the era of free enterprise, her bourgeoisie shunned unprotected investment in native industries while her bureaucracy, also a product of the mercantile system, survived its collapse. Despite the fact that the bureaucracy also lost all its productive functions, it is even today more characteristic of the country and a greater impediment to her recovery than the bourgeoisie.

[6] This had been the case in England since Queen Elizabeth's Marrano banker and the Jewish financiers of Cromwell's armies, until one of the twelve Jewish brokers admitted to the London Stock Exchange was said to have handled one-quarter of all government loans of his day (see Salo W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews,* 1937, Vol. II: *Jews and Capitalism*); in Austria, where in only forty years (1695-1739), the Jews credited the government with more than 35 million florins and where the death of Samuel Oppenheimer in 1703 resulted in a grave financial crisis for both state and Emperor; in Bavaria, where in 1808 80 per cent of all government loans were endorsed and negotiated by Jews (see M. Grunwald, *Samuel Oppenheimer und sein Kreis,* 1913); in France, where mercantile conditions were especially favorable for the Jews, Colbert already praised their great usefulness to the state (Baron, *op. cit., loc. cit.*), and where in the middle of the eighteenth century the German Jew, Liefman Calmer, was made a baron by a grateful king who appreciated services and loyalty to "Our state and Our person" (Robert Anchel, "Un Baron Juif Français au 18e siècle, Liefman Calmer," in *Souvenir et Science,* I, pp. 52-55); and also in Prussia where Frederick II's *Münzjuden* were titled and where, at the end of the eighteenth century, 400 Jewish families formed one of the wealthiest groups in Berlin. (One of the best descriptions of Berlin and the role of the Jews in its society at the turn of the eighteenth century is to be found in Wilhelm Dilthey, *Das Leben Schleiermachers,* 1870, pp. 182 ff.).

acteristic of these times, when Jewish individuals and the first small wealthy Jewish communities were more powerful than at any time in the nineteenth century,[7] was the frankness with which their privileged status and their right to it was discussed, and the careful testimony of the authorities to the importance of their services to the state. There was not the slightest doubt or ambiguity about the connection between services rendered and privileges granted. Privileged Jews received noble titles almost as a matter of course in France, Bavaria, Austria and Prussia, so that even outwardly they were more than just wealthy men. The fact that the Rothschilds had such a hard time getting their application for a title approved by the Austrian government (they succeeded in 1817), was the signal that a whole period had come to an end.

By the end of the eighteenth century it had become clear that none of the estates or classes in the various countries was willing or able to become the new ruling class, that is to identify itself with the government as the nobility had done for centuries.[8] The failure of the absolute monarchy to find a substitute within society led to the full development of the nation-state and its claim to be above all classes, completely independent of society and its particular interests, the true and only representative of the nation as a whole. It resulted, on the other side, in a deepening of the split between state and society upon which the body politic of the nation rested. Without it, there would have been no need—or even any possibility—of introducing the Jews into European history on equal terms.

When all attempts to ally itself with one of the major classes in society had failed, the state chose to establish itself as a tremendous business concern. This was meant to be for administrative purposes only, to be sure, but the range of interests, financial and otherwise, and the costs were so great that one cannot but recognize the existence of a special sphere of state business from the eighteenth century on. The independent growth of state business was caused by a conflict with the financially powerful forces of the time, with the bourgeoisie which went the way of private investment, shunned all state intervention, and refused active financial participation in what appeared to be an "unproductive" enterprise. Thus the Jews were the only part of the population willing to finance the state's beginnings and to tie their destinies to its further development. With their credit and international connections, they were in an excellent position to help the nation-state to

[7] Early in the eighteenth century, Austrian Jews succeeded in banishing Eisemenger's *Entdecktes Judentum,* 1703, and at the end of it, *The Merchant of Venice* could be played in Berlin only with a little prologue apologizing to the (not emancipated) Jewish audience.

[8] The only, and irrelevant, exception might be those tax collectors, called *fermiers-généraux,* in France, who rented from the state the right to collect taxes by guaranteeing a fixed amount to the government. They earned their great wealth from and depended directly upon the absolute monarchy, but were too small a group and too isolated a phenomenon to be economically influential by themselves.

establish itself among the biggest enterprises and employers of the time.[9]

Great privileges, decisive changes in the Jewish condition, were necessarily the price of the fulfillment of such services, and, at the same time, the reward for great risks. The greatest privilege was equality. When the *Münzjuden* of Frederick of Prussia or the court Jews of the Austrian Emperor received through "general privileges" and "patents" the same status which half a century later all Prussian Jews received under the name of emancipation and equal rights; when, at the end of the eighteenth century and at the height of their wealth, the Berlin Jews managed to prevent an influx from the Eastern provinces because they did not care to share their "equality" with poorer brethren whom they did not recognize as equals; when, at the time of the French National Assembly, the Bordeaux and Avignon Jews protested violently against the French government's granting equality to Jews of the Eastern provinces—it became clear that at least the Jews were not thinking in terms of equal rights but of privileges and special liberties. And it is really not surprising that privileged Jews, intimately linked to the businesses of their governments and quite aware of the nature and conditions of their status, were reluctant to accept for all Jews this gift of a freedom which they themselves possessed as the price for services, which they knew had been calculated as such and therefore could hardly become a right for all.[10]

Only at the end of the nineteenth century, with the rise of imperialism, did the owning classes begin to change their original estimate of the unproductivity of state business. Imperialist expansion, together with the growing perfection of the instruments of violence and the state's absolute monopoly of them, made the state an interesting business proposition. This meant, of course, that the Jews gradually but automatically lost their exclusive and unique position.

But the good fortune of the Jews, their rise from obscurity to political significance, would have to come to an even earlier end if they had been confined to a mere business function in the growing nation-states. By the middle of the last century some states had won enough confidence to get

[9] The urgencies compelling the ties between government business and the Jews may be gauged by those cases in which decidedly anti-Jewish officials had to carry out the policies. So Bismarck, in his youth, made a few antisemitic speeches only to become, as chancellor of the Reich, a close friend of Bleichroeder and a reliable protector of the Jews against Court Chaplain Stoecker's antisemitic movement in Berlin. William II, although as Crown Prince and a member of the anti-Jewish Prussian nobility very sympathetic to all antisemitic movements in the eighties, changed his antisemitic convictions and deserted his antisemitic protégés overnight when he inherited the throne.

[10] As early as the eighteenth century, wherever whole Jewish groups got wealthy enough to be useful to the state, they enjoyed collective privileges and were separated as a group from their less wealthy and useful brethren, even in the same country. Like the *Schutzjuden* in Prussia, the Bordeaux and Bayonne Jews in France enjoyed equality long before the French Revolution and were even invited to present their complaints and propositions along with the other General Estates in the *Convocation des Etats Généraux* of 1787.

along without Jewish backing and financing of government loans.[11] The nationals' growing consciousness, moreover, that their private destinies were becoming more and more dependent upon those of their countries made them ready to grant the governments more of the necessary credit. Equality itself was symbolized in the availability to all of government bonds which were finally even considered the most secure form of capital investment simply because the state, which could wage national wars, was the only agency which actually could protect its citizens' properties. From the middle of the nineteenth century on, the Jews could keep their prominent position only because they had still another more important and fateful role to play, a role also intimately linked to their participation in the destinies of the state. Without territory and without a government of their own, the Jews had always been an inter-European element; this international status the nation-state necessarily preserved because the Jews' financial services rested on it. But even when their economic usefulness had exhausted itself, the inter-European status of the Jews remained of great national importance in times of national conflicts and wars.

While the need of the nation-states for Jewish services developed slowly and logically, growing out of the general context of European history, the rise of the Jews to political and economic significance was sudden and unexpected to themselves as well as their neighbors. By the later Middle Ages the Jewish moneylender had lost all his former importance, and in the early sixteenth century Jews had already been expelled from cities and trade centers into villages and countryside, thereby exchanging a more uniform protection from remote higher authorities for an insecure status granted by petty local nobles.[12] The turning point had been in the seventeenth century when, during the Thirty Years' War, precisely because of their dispersion these small, insignificant moneylenders could guarantee the necessary provisions to the mercenary armies of the war-lords in far-away lands and with the aid of small peddlers buy victuals in entire provinces. Since these wars remained half-feudal, more or less private affairs of the princes, involving no interest of other classes and enlisting no help from the people, the Jews' gain in status was very limited and hardly visible. But the number of court Jews increased because now every feudal household needed the equivalent of the court Jew.

As long as these court Jews served small feudal lords who, as members

[11] Jean Capefigue (*Histoire des grandes opérations financières,* Tome III: *Banque, Bourses, Emprunts,* 1855) pretends that during the July Monarchy only the Jews, and especially the house of Rothschild, prevented a sound state credit based upon the Banque de France. He also claims that the events of 1848 made the activities of the Rothschilds superfluous. Raphael Strauss ("The Jews in the Economic Evolution of Central Europe" in *Jewish Social Studies,* III, 1, 1941) also remarks that after 1830 "public credit already became less of a risk so that Christian banks began to handle this business in increasing measure." Against these interpretations stands the fact that excellent relations prevailed between the Rothschilds and Napoleon III, although there can be no doubt as to the general trend of the time.

[12] See Priebatsch, *op. cit.*

of the nobility, did not aspire to represent any centralized authority, they were the servants of only one group in society. The property they handled, the money they lent, the provisions they bought up, all were considered the private property of their master, so that such activities could not involve them in political matters. Hated or favored, Jews could not become a political issue of any importance.

When, however, the function of the feudal lord changed, when he developed into a prince or king, the function of his court Jew changed too. The Jews, being an alien element, without much interest in such changes in their environment, were usually the last to become aware of their heightened status. As far as they were concerned, they went on handling private business, and their loyalty remained a personal affair unrelated to political considerations. Loyalty meant honesty; it did not mean taking sides in a conflict or remaining true for political reasons. To buy up provisions, to clothe and feed an army, to lend currency for the hiring of mercenaries, meant simply an interest in the well-being of a business partner.

This kind of relationship between Jews and aristocracy was the only one that ever tied a Jewish group to another stratum in society. After it disappeared in the early nineteenth century, it was never replaced. Its only remnant for the Jews was a penchant for aristocratic titles (especially in Austria and France), and for the non-Jews a brand of liberal antisemitism which lumped Jews and nobility together and pretended that they were in some kind of financial alliance against the rising bourgeoisie. Such argumentation, current in Prussia and France, had a certain amount of plausibility as long as there was no general emancipation of the Jews. The privileges of the court Jews had indeed an obvious similarity to the rights and liberties of the nobility, and it was true that the Jews were as much afraid of losing their privileges and used the same arguments against equality as members of the aristocracy. The plausibility became even greater in the eighteenth century when most privileged Jews were given minor titles, and at the opening of the nineteenth century when wealthy Jews who had lost their ties with the Jewish communities looked for new social status and began to model themselves on the aristocracy. But all this was of little consequence, first because it was quite obvious that the nobility was on the decline and that the Jews, on the contrary, were continually gaining in status, and also because the aristocracy itself, especially in Prussia, happened to become the first class that produced an antisemitic ideology.

The Jews had been the purveyors in wars and the servants of kings, but they did not and were not expected to engage in the conflicts themselves. When these conflicts enlarged into national wars, they still remained an international element whose importance and usefulness lay precisely in their not being bound to any national cause. No longer state bankers and purveyors in wars (the last war financed by a Jew was the Prussian-Austrian war of 1866, when Bleichroeder helped Bismarck after the latter had been refused the necessary credits by the Prussian Parliament), the Jews had become the financial advisers and assistants in peace treaties and, in a less

organized and more indefinite way, the providers of news. The last peace treaties drawn up without Jewish assistance were those of the Congress of Vienna, between the continental powers and France. Bleichroeder's role in the peace negotiations between Germany and France in 1871 was already more significant than his help in war,[13] and he rendered even more important services in the late seventies when, through his connections with the Rothschilds, he provided Bismarck with an indirect news channel to Benjamin Disraeli. The peace treaties of Versailles were the last in which Jews played a prominent role as advisers. The last Jew who owed his prominence on the national scene to his international Jewish connection was Walter Rathenau, the ill-fated foreign minister of the Weimar Republic. He paid with his life for having (as one of his colleagues put it after his death) donated his prestige in the international world of finance and the support of Jews everywhere in the world [14] to the ministers of the new Republic, who were completely unknown on the international scene.

That antisemitic governments would not use Jews for the business of war and peace is obvious. But the elimination of Jews from the international scene had a more general and deeper significance than antisemitism. Just because the Jews had been used as a non-national element, they could be of value in war and peace only as long as during the war everybody tried consciously to keep the possibilities of peace intact, only as long as everybody's aim was a peace of compromise and the re-establishment of a *modus vivendi*. As soon as "victory or death" became a determining policy, and war actually aimed at the complete annihilation of the enemy, the Jews could no longer be of any use. This policy spelled destruction of their collective existence in any case, although the disappearance from the political scene and even extinction of a specific group-life would by no means necessarily have led to their physical extermination. The frequently repeated argument, however, that the Jews would have become Nazis as easily as their German fellow-citizens if only they had been permitted to join the movement, just as they had enlisted in Italy's Fascist party before Italian Fascism introduced race legislation, is only half true. It is true only with respect to the psychology of individual Jews, which of course did not greatly differ from the psychology of their environment. It is patently false in a historical sense. Nazism, even without antisemitism, would have been the deathblow to the existence of the Jewish people in Europe; to consent to it would have

[13] According to an anecdote, faithfully reported by all his biographers, Bismarck said immediately after the French defeat in 1871: "First of all, Bleichroeder has got to go to Paris, to get together with his fellow Jews and to talk it (the five billion francs for reparations) over with the bankers." (See Otto Joehlinger, *Bismarck und die Juden*, Berlin, 1921.)

[14] See Walter Frank, "Walter Rathenau und die blonde Rasse," in *Forschungen zur Judenfrage*, Band IV, 1940. Frank, in spite of his official position under the Nazis, remained somewhat careful about his sources and methods. In this article he quotes from the obituaries on Rathenau in the *Israelitisches Familienblatt* (Hamburg, July 6, 1922), *Die Zeit*, (June, 1922) and *Berliner Tageblatt* (May 31, 1922).

meant suicide, not necessarily for individuals of Jewish origin, but for the Jews as a people.

To the first contradiction, which determined the destiny of European Jewry during the last centuries, that is, the contradiction between equality and privilege (rather of equality granted in the form and for the purpose of privilege) must be added a second contradiction: the Jews, the only non-national European people, were threatened more than any other by the sudden collapse of the system of nation-states. This situation is less paradoxical than it may appear at first glance. Representatives of the nation, whether Jacobins from Robespierre to Clemenceau, or representatives of Central European reactionary governments from Metternich to Bismarck, had one thing in common: they were all sincerely concerned with the "balance of power" in Europe. They tried, of course, to shift this balance to the advantage of their respective countries, but they never dreamed of seizing a monopoly over the continent or of annihilating their neighbors completely. The Jews could not only be used in the interest of this precarious balance, they even became a kind of symbol of the common interest of the European nations.

It is therefore more than accidental that the catastrophic defeats of the peoples of Europe began with the catastrophe of the Jewish people. It was particularly easy to begin the dissolution of the precarious European balance of power with the elimination of the Jews, and particularly difficult to understand that more was involved in this elimination than an unusually cruel nationalism or an ill-timed revival of "old prejudices." When the catastrophe came, the fate of the Jewish people was considered a "special case" whose history follows exceptional laws, and whose destiny was therefore of no general relevance. This breakdown of European solidarity was at once reflected in the breakdown of Jewish solidarity all over Europe. When the persecution of German Jews began, Jews of other European countries discovered that German Jews constituted an exception whose fate could bear no resemblance to their own. Similarly, the collapse of German Jewry was preceded by its split into innumerable factions, each of which believed and hoped that its basic human rights would be protected by special privileges—the privilege of having been a veteran of World War I, the child of a veteran, the proud son of a father killed in action. It looked as though the annihilation of all individuals of Jewish origin was being preceded by the bloodless destruction and self-dissolution of the Jewish people, as though the Jewish people had owed its existence exclusively to other peoples and their hatred.

It is still one of the most moving aspects of Jewish history that the Jews' active entry into European history was caused by their being an inter-European, non-national element in a world of growing or existing nations. That this role proved more lasting and more essential than their function as state bankers is one of the material reasons for the new modern type of Jewish productivity in the arts and sciences. It is not without historical justice that their downfall coincided with the ruin of a system and a political

body which, whatever its other defects, had needed and could tolerate a purely European element.

The grandeur of this consistently European existence should not be forgotten because of the many undoubtedly less attractive aspects of Jewish history during the last centuries. The few European authors who have been aware of this aspect of the "Jewish question" had no special sympathies for the Jews, but an unbiased estimate of the whole European situation. Among them was Diderot, the only eighteenth-century French philosopher who was not hostile to the Jews and who recognized in them a useful link between Europeans of different nationalities; Wilhelm von Humboldt who, witnessing their emancipation through the French Revolution, remarked that the Jews would lose their universality when they were changed into Frenchmen; [15] and finally Friedrich Nietzsche, who out of disgust with Bismarck's German Reich coined the word "good European," which made possible his correct estimate of the significant role of the Jews in European history, and saved him from falling into the pitfalls of cheap philosemitism or patronizing "progressive" attitudes.

This evaluation, though quite correct in the description of a surface phenomenon, overlooks the most serious paradox embodied in the curious political history of the Jews. Of all European peoples, the Jews had been the only one without a state of their own and had been, precisely for this reason, so eager and so suitable for alliances with governments and states as such, no matter what these governments or states might represent. On the other hand, the Jews had no political tradition or experience, and were as little aware of the tension between society and state as they were of the obvious risks and power-possibilities of their new role. What little knowledge or traditional practice they brought to politics had its source first in the Roman Empire, where they had been protected, so to speak, by the Roman soldier, and later, in the Middle Ages, when they sought and received protection against the population and the local rulers from remote monarchical and Church authorities. From these experiences, they had somehow drawn the conclusion that authority, and especially high authority, was favorable to them and that lower officials, and especially the common people, were dangerous. This prejudice, which expressed a definite historical truth but no longer corresponded to new circumstances, was as deeply rooted in and as unconsciously shared by the vast majority of Jews as corresponding prejudices about Jews were commonly accepted by Gentiles.

The history of the relationship between Jews and governments is rich in examples of how quickly Jewish bankers switched their allegiance from one

[15] Wilhelm von Humboldt, *Tagebücher*, ed. by Leitzmann, Berlin, 1916-1918, I, 475.—The article "Juif" of the *Encyclopédie*, 1751-1765, Vol. IX, which was probably written by Diderot: "Thus dispersed in our time . . . [the Jews] have become instruments of communication between the most distant countries. They are like the cogs and nails needed in a great building in order to join and hold together all other parts."

government to the next even after revolutionary changes. It took the French Rothschilds in 1848 hardly twenty-four hours to transfer their services from the government of Louis Philippe to the new short-lived French Republic and again to Napoleon III. The same process repeated itself, at a slightly slower pace, after the downfall of the Second Empire and the establishment of the Third Republic. In Germany this sudden and easy change was symbolized, after the revolution of 1918, in the financial policies of the Warburgs on one hand and the shifting political ambitions of Walter Rathenau on the other.[16]

More is involved in this type of behavior than the simple bourgeois pattern which always assumes that nothing succeeds like success.[17] Had the Jews been bourgeois in the ordinary sense of the word, they might have gauged correctly the tremendous power-possibilities of their new functions, and at least have tried to play that fictitious role of a secret world power which makes and unmakes governments, which antisemites assigned to them anyway. Nothing, however, could be farther from the truth. The Jews, without knowledge of or interest in power, never thought of exercising more than mild pressure for minor purposes of self-defense. This lack of ambition was later sharply resented by the more assimilated sons of Jewish bankers and businessmen. While some of them dreamed, like Disraeli, of a secret Jewish society to which they might belong and which never existed, others, like Rathenau, who happened to be better informed, indulged in half-antisemitic tirades against the wealthy traders who had neither power nor social status.

This innocence has never been quite understood by non-Jewish statesmen or historians. On the other hand, their detachment from power was so much taken for granted by Jewish representatives or writers that they hardly ever mentioned it except to express their surprise at the absurd suspicions leveled against them. In the memoirs of statesmen of the last century many remarks occur to the effect that there won't be a war because Rothschild in London or Paris or Vienna does not want it. Even so sober and reliable a historian as J. A. Hobson could state as late as 1905: "Does any one seriously suppose that a great war could be undertaken by any European state, or a great state loan subscribed, if the House of Rothschild and its connexions set their face against it?" [18] This misjudgment is as amusing in its naïve assumption

[16] Walter Rathenau, foreign minister of the Weimar Republic in 1921 and one of the outstanding representatives of Germany's new will to democracy, had proclaimed as late as 1917 his "deep monarchical convictions," according to which only an "anointed" and no "upstart of a lucky career" should lead a country. See *Von kommenden Dingen,* 1917, p. 247.

[17] This bourgeois pattern, however, should not be forgotten. If it were only a matter of individual motives and behavior patterns, the methods of the house of Rothschild certainly did not differ much from those of their Gentile colleagues. For instance, Napoleon's banker, Ouvrard, after having provided the financial means for Napoleon's hundred days' war, immediately offered his services to the returning Bourbons.

[18] J. H. Hobson, *Imperialism,* 1905, p. 57 of unrevised 1938 edition.

that everyone is like oneself, as Metternich's sincere belief that "the house of Rothschild played a greater role in France than any foreign government," or his confident prediction to the Viennese Rothschilds shortly before the Austrian revolution in 1848: "If I should go to the dogs, you would go with me." The truth of that matter was that the Rothschilds had as little political idea as other Jewish bankers of what they wanted to carry out in France, to say nothing of a well-defined purpose which would even remotely suggest a war. On the contrary, like their fellow Jews they never allied themselves with any specific government, but rather with governments, with authority as such. If at this time and later they showed a marked preference for monarchical governments as against republics, it was only because they rightly suspected that republics were based to a greater extent on the will of the people, which they instinctively mistrusted.

How deep the Jews' faith in the state was, and how fantastic their ignorance of actual conditions in Europe, came to light in the last years of the Weimar Republic when, already reasonably frightened about the future, the Jews for once tried their hand in politics. With the help of a few non-Jews, they then founded that middle-class party which they called "State-party" (*Staatspartei*), the very name a contradiction in terms. They were so naïvely convinced that their "party," supposedly representing them in political and social struggle, ought to be the state itself, that the whole relationship of the party to the state never dawned upon them. If anybody had bothered to take seriously this party of respectable and bewildered gentlemen, he could only have concluded that loyalty at any price was a façade behind which sinister forces plotted to take over the state.

Just as the Jews ignored completely the growing tension between state and society, they were also the last to be aware that circumstances had forced them into the center of the conflict. They therefore never knew how to evaluate antisemitism, or rather never recognized the moment when social discrimination changed into a political argument. For more than a hundred years, antisemitism had slowly and gradually made its way into almost all social strata in almost all European countries until it emerged suddenly as the one issue upon which an almost unified opinion could be achieved. The law according to which this process developed was simple: each class of society which came into a conflict with the state as such became antisemitic because the only social group which seemed to represent the state were the Jews. And the only class which proved almost immune from antisemitic propaganda were the workers who, absorbed in the class struggle and equipped with a Marxist explanation of history, never came into direct conflict with the state but only with another class of society, the bourgeoisie, which the Jews certainly did not represent, and of which they were never a significant part.

The political emancipation of the Jews at the turn of the eighteenth century in some countries, and its discussion in the rest of Central and Western Europe, resulted first of all in a decisive change in their attitude

toward the state, which was somehow symbolized in the rise of the house of Rothschild. The new policy of these court Jews, who were the first to become full-fledged state bankers, came to light when they were no longer content to serve one particular prince or government through their international relationships with court Jews of other countries, but decided to establish themselves internationally and serve simultaneously and concurrently the governments in Germany, France, Great Britain, Italy and Austria. To a large extent, this unprecedented course was a reaction of the Rothschilds to the dangers of real emancipation, which, together with equality, threatened to nationalize the Jewries of the respective countries, and to destroy the very inter-European advantages on which the position of Jewish bankers had rested. Old Meyer Amschel Rothschild, the founder of the house, must have recognized that the inter-European status of Jews was no longer secure and that he had better try to realize this unique international position in his own family. The establishment of his five sons in the five financial capitals of Europe—Frankfurt, Paris, London, Naples and Vienna—was his ingenious way out of the embarrassing emancipation of the Jews.[19]

The Rothschilds had entered upon their spectacular career as the financial servants of the Kurfürst of Hessen, one of the outstanding moneylenders of his time, who taught them business practice and provided them with many of their customers. Their great advantage was that they lived in Frankfurt, the only great urban center from which Jews had never been expelled and where they formed nearly 10 per cent of the city's population at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The Rothschilds started as court Jews without being under the jurisdiction of either a prince or the Free City, but directly under the authority of the distant Emperor in Vienna. They thus combined all the advantages of the Jewish status in the Middle Ages with those of their own times, and were much less dependent upon nobility or other local authorities than any of their fellow court Jews. The later financial activities of the house, the tremendous fortune they amassed, and their even greater symbolic fame since the early nineteenth century, are sufficiently well known.[20] They entered the scene of big business during the last years of the Napoleonic wars when—from 1811 to 1816—almost half the English subventions to the Continental powers went through their hands. When after the defeat of Napoleon the Continent needed great government loans everywhere for the reorganization of its state machines and the erection of financial structures on the model of the Bank of England, the Rothschilds enjoyed almost a monopoly in the handling of state loans. This lasted for three generations

[19] How well the Rothschilds knew the sources of their strength is shown in their early house law according to which daughters and their husbands were eliminated from the business of the house. The girls were allowed, and after 1871, even encouraged, to marry into the non-Jewish aristocracy; the male descendants had to marry Jewish girls exclusively, and if possible (in the first generation this was generally the case) members of the family.

[20] See especially Egon Cesar Conte Corti, *The Rise of the House of Rothschild*, New York, 1927.

during which they succeeded in defeating all Jewish and non-Jewish competitors in the field. "The House of Rothschild became," as Capefigue put it,[21] "the chief treasurer of the Holy Alliance."

The international establishment of the house of Rothschild and its sudden rise above all other Jewish bankers changed the whole structure of Jewish state business. Gone was the accidental development, unplanned and unorganized, when individual Jews shrewd enough to take advantage of a unique opportunity frequently rose to the heights of great wealth and fell to the depths of poverty in one man's lifetime; when such a fate hardly touched the destinies of the Jewish people as a whole except insofar as such Jews sometimes had acted as protectors and petitioners for distant communities; when, no matter how numerous the wealthy moneylenders or how influential the individual court Jews, there was no sign of the development of a well-defined Jewish group which collectively enjoyed specific privileges and rendered specific services. It was precisely the Rothschilds' monopoly on the issuance of government loans which made it possible and necessary to draw on Jewish capital at large, to direct a great percentage of Jewish wealth into the channels of state business, and which thereby provided the natural basis for a new inter-European cohesiveness of Central and Western European Jewry. What in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had been an unorganized connection among individual Jews of different countries, now became the more systematic disposition of these scattered opportunities by a single firm, physically present in all important European capitals, in constant contact with all sections of the Jewish people, and in complete possession of all pertinent information and all opportunities for organization.[22]

The exclusive position of the house of Rothschild in the Jewish world replaced to a certain extent the old bonds of religious and spiritual tradition whose gradual loosening under the impact of Western culture for the first time threatened the very existence of the Jewish people. To the outer world, this one family also became a symbol of the working reality of Jewish internationalism in a world of nation-states and nationally organized peoples. Where, indeed, was there better proof of the fantastic concept of a Jewish world government than in this one family, nationals of five different countries, prominent everywhere, in close co-operation with at least three different governments (the French, the Austrian, and the British), whose frequent conflicts never for a moment shook the solidarity of interest of their state bankers? No propaganda could have created a symbol more effective for political purposes than the reality itself.

The popular notion that the Jews—in contrast to other peoples—were tied together by the supposedly closer bonds of blood and family ties, was to a large extent stimulated by the reality of this one family, which virtually

[21] Capefigue, *op. cit.*

[22] It has never been possible to ascertain the extent to which the Rothschilds used Jewish capital for their own business transactions and how far their control of Jewish bankers went. The family has never permitted a scholar to work in its archives.

represented the whole economic and political significance of the Jewish people. The fateful consequence was that when, for reasons which had nothing to do with the Jewish question, race problems came to the foreground of the political scene, the Jews at once fitted all ideologies and doctrines which defined a people by blood ties and family characteristics.

Yet another, less accidental, fact accounts for this image of the Jewish people. In the preservation of the Jewish people the family had played a far greater role than in any Western political or social body except the nobility. Family ties were among the most potent and stubborn elements with which the Jewish people resisted assimilation and dissolution. Just as declining European nobility strengthened its marriage and house laws, so Western Jewry became all the more family-conscious in the centuries of their spiritual and religious dissolution. Without the old hope for Messianic redemption and the firm ground of traditional folkways, Western Jewry became overconscious of the fact that their survival had been achieved in an alien and often hostile environment. They began to look upon the inner family circle as a kind of last fortress and to behave toward members of their own group as though they were members of a big family. In other words, the antisemitic picture of the Jewish people as a family closely knit by blood ties had something in common with the Jews' own picture of themselves.

This situation was an important factor in the early rise and continuous growth of antisemitism in the nineteenth century. Which group of people would turn antisemitic in a given country at a given historical moment depended exclusively upon general circumstances which made them ready for a violent antagonism to their government. But the remarkable similarity of arguments and images which time and again were spontaneously reproduced have an intimate relationship with the truth they distort. We find the Jews always represented as an international trade organization, a world-wide family concern with identical interests everywhere, a secret force behind the throne which degrades all visible governments into mere façade, or into marionettes whose strings are manipulated from behind the scenes. Because of their close relationship to state sources of power, the Jews were invariably identified with power, and because of their aloofness from society and concentration upon the closed circle of the family, they were invariably suspected of working for the destruction of all social structures.

II: *Early Antisemitism*

IT IS an obvious, if frequently forgotten, rule that anti-Jewish feeling acquires political relevance only when it can combine with a major political issue, or when Jewish group interests come into open conflict with those of a major class in society. Modern antisemitism, as we know it from Central and Western European countries, had political rather than economic causes, while complicated class conditions produced the violent

popular hatred of Jews in Poland and Rumania. There, due to the inability of the governments to solve the land question and give the nation-state a minimum of equality through liberation of the peasants, the feudal aristocracy succeeded not only in maintaining its political dominance but also in preventing the rise of a normal middle class. The Jews of these countries, strong in number and weak in every other respect, seemingly fulfilled some of the functions of the middle class, because they were mostly shopkeepers and traders and because as a group they stood between the big landowners and the propertyless classes. Small property holders, however, can exist as well in a feudal as in a capitalist economy. The Jews, here as elsewhere, were unable or unwilling to develop along industrial capitalist lines, so that the net result of their activities was a scattered, inefficient organization of consumption without an adequate system of production. The Jewish positions were an obstacle for a normal capitalistic development because they looked as though they were the only ones from which economic advancement might be expected without being capable of fulfilling this expectation. Because of their appearance, Jewish interests were felt to be in conflict with those sections of the population from which a middle class could normally have developed. The governments, on the other hand, tried halfheartedly to encourage a middle class without liquidating the nobility and big landowners. Their only serious attempt was economic liquidation of the Jews—partly as a concession to public opinion, and partly because the Jews were actually still a part of the old feudal order. For centuries they had been middlemen between the nobility and peasantry; now they formed a middle class without fulfilling its productive functions and were indeed one of the elements that stood in the way of industrialization and capitalization.[23] These Eastern European conditions, however, although they constituted the essence of the Jewish mass question, are of little importance in our context. Their political significance was limited to backward countries where the ubiquitous hatred of Jews made it almost useless as a weapon for specific purposes.

Antisemitism first flared up in Prussia immediately after the defeat by Napoleon in 1807, when the "Reformers" changed the political structure so that the nobility lost its privileges and the middle classes won their freedom to develop. This reform, a "revolution from above," changed the half-feudal structure of Prussia's enlightened despotism into a more or less modern nation-state whose final stage was the German Reich of 1871.

Although a majority of the Berlin bankers of the time were Jews, the Prussian reforms did not require any considerable financial help from them. The outspoken sympathies of the Prussian reformers, their advocacy of Jewish emancipation, was the consequence of the new equality of all citizens, the abolition of privilege, and the introduction of free trade. They were not interested in the preservation of Jews as Jews for special purposes. Their

[23] James Parkes, *The Emergence of the Jewish Problem, 1878-1939*, 1946, discusses these conditions briefly and without bias in chapters iv and vi.

reply to the argument that under conditions of equality "the Jews might cease to exist" would always have been: "Let them. How does this matter to a government which asks only that they become good citizens?" [24] Emancipation, moreover, was relatively inoffensive, for Prussia had just lost the eastern provinces which had a large and poor Jewish population. The emancipation decree of 1812 concerned only those wealthy and useful Jewish groups who were already privileged with most civic rights and who, through the general abolition of privileges, would have suffered a severe loss in civil status. For these groups, emancipation meant not much more than a general legal affirmation of the status quo.

But the sympathies of the Prussian reformers for the Jews were more than the logical consequence of their general political aspirations. When, almost a decade later and in the midst of rising antisemitism, Wilhelm von Humboldt declared: "I love the Jews really only *en masse; en détail* I rather avoid them," [25] he stood of course in open opposition to the prevailing fashion, which favored individual Jews and despised the Jewish people. A true democrat, he wanted to liberate an oppressed people and not bestow privileges upon individuals. But this view was also in the tradition of the old Prussian government officials, whose consistent insistence throughout the eighteenth century upon better conditions and improved education for Jews have frequently been recognized. Their support was not motivated by economic or state reasons alone, but by a natural sympathy for the only social group that also stood outside the social body and within the sphere of the state, albeit for entirely different reasons. The education of a civil service whose loyalty belonged to the state and was independent of change in government, and which had severed its class ties, was one of the outstanding achievements of the old Prussian state. These officials were a decisive group in eighteenth-century Prussia, and the actual predecessors of the Reformers; they remained the backbone of the state machine all through the nineteenth century, although they lost much of their influence to the aristocracy after the Congress of Vienna.[26]

Through the attitude of the Reformers and especially through the emancipation edict of 1812, the special interests of the state in the Jews became manifest in a curious way. The old frank recognition of their usefulness as Jews (Frederick II of Prussia exclaimed, when he heard of possible mass-conversion: "I hope they won't do such a devilish thing!") [27] was gone. Emancipation was granted in the name of a principle, and any allusion to

[24] Christian Wilhelm Dohm, *Über die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden,* Berlin and Stettin, 1781, I, 174.

[25] *Wilhelm und Caroline von Humboldt in ihren Briefen,* Berlin, 1900, V, 236.

[26] For an excellent description of these civil servants who were not essentially different in different countries, see Henri Pirenne, *A History of Europe from the Invasions to the XVI Century,* London, 1939, pp. 361-362: "Without class prejudices and hostile to the privileges of the great nobles who despised them, . . . it was not the King who spoke through them, but the anonymous monarchy, superior to all, subduing all to its power."

[27] See *Kleines Jahrbuch des Nützlichen und Angenehmen für Israeliten,* 1847.

special Jewish services would have been sacrilege, according to the mentality of the time. The special conditions which had led to emancipation, though well known to everybody concerned, were now hidden as if they were a great and terrible secret. The edict itself, on the other hand, was conceived as the last and, in a sense, the most shining achievement of change from a feudal state into a nation-state and a society where henceforth there would be no special privileges whatsoever.

Among the naturally bitter reactions of the aristocracy, the class that was hardest hit, was a sudden and unexpected outburst of antisemitism. Its most articulate spokesman, Ludwig von der Marwitz (prominent among the founders of a conservative ideology), submitted a lengthy petition to the government in which he said that the Jews would now be the only group enjoying special advantages, and spoke of the "transformation of the old awe-inspiring Prussian monarchy into a new-fangled Jew-state." The political attack was accompanied by a social boycott which changed the face of Berlin society almost overnight. For aristocrats had been among the first to establish friendly social relationship with Jews and had made famous those salons of Jewish hostesses at the turn of the century, where a truly mixed society gathered for a brief time. To a certain extent, it is true, this lack of prejudice was the result of the services rendered by the Jewish moneylender who for centuries had been excluded from all greater business transactions and found his only opportunity in the economically unproductive and insignificant but socially important loans to people who had a tendency to live beyond their means. Nevertheless, it is remarkable that social relationships survived when the absolute monarchies with their greater financial possibilities had made the private loan business and the individual small court Jew a thing of the past. A nobleman's natural resentment against losing a valuable source of help in emergencies made him want to marry a Jewish girl with a rich father rather than hate the Jewish people.

Nor was the outburst of aristocratic antisemitism the result of a closer contact between Jews and nobility. On the contrary, they had in common an instinctive opposition to the new values of the middle classes, and one that sprang from very similar sources. In Jewish as well as in noble families, the individual was regarded first of all as a member of a family; his duties were first of all determined by the family which transcended the life and importance of the individual. Both were a-national and inter-European, and each understood the other's way of life in which national allegiance was secondary to loyalty to a family which more often than not was scattered all over Europe. They shared a conception that the present is nothing more than an insignificant link in the chain of past and future generations. Anti-Jewish liberal writers did not fail to point out this curious similarity of principles, and they concluded that perhaps one could get rid of nobility only by first getting rid of the Jews, and this not because of their financial connections but because both were considered to be a hindrance to the true development of that "innate personality," that ideology of self-respect, which the liberal

middle classes employed in their fight against the concepts of birth, family, and heritage.

These pro-Jewish factors make it all the more significant that the aristocrats started the long line of antisemitic political argumentation. Neither economic ties nor social intimacy carried any weight in a situation where aristocracy openly opposed the egalitarian nation-state. Socially, the attack on the state identified the Jews with the government; despite the fact that the middle classes, economically and socially, reaped the real gains in the reforms, politically they were hardly blamed and suffered the old contemptuous aloofness.

After the Congress of Vienna, when during the long decades of peaceful reaction under the Holy Alliance, Prussian nobility had won back much of its influence on the state and temporarily become even more prominent than it had ever been in the eighteenth century, aristocratic antisemitism changed at once into mild discrimination without further political significance.[28] At the same time, with the help of the romantic intellectuals, conservatism reached its full development as one of the political ideologies which in Germany adopted a very characteristic and ingeniously equivocal attitude toward the Jews. From then on the nation-state, equipped with conservative arguments, drew a distinct line between Jews who were needed and wanted and those who were not. Under the pretext of the essential Christian character of the state—what could have been more alien to the enlightened despots!—the growing Jewish intelligentsia could be openly discriminated against without harming the affairs of bankers and businessmen. This kind of discrimination which tried to close the universities to Jews by excluding them from the civil services had the double advantage of indicating that the nation-state valued special services higher than equality, and of preventing, or at least postponing, the birth of a new group of Jews who were of no apparent use to the state and even likely to be assimilated into society.[29] When, in the eighties, Bismarck went to considerable trouble to protect the Jews against Stoecker's antisemitic propaganda, he said *expressis verbis* that he wanted to protest only against the attacks upon "moneyed Jewry . . . whose interests are tied to the conservation of our state institutions" and that his friend Bleichroeder, the Prussian banker, did not complain about attacks on Jews in general (which he might have overlooked) but on rich Jews.[30]

[28] When the Prussian Government submitted a new emancipation law to the *Vereinigte Landtage* in 1847, nearly all members of the high aristocracy favored complete Jewish emancipation, See I. Elbogen, *Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland,* Berlin, 1935, p. 244.

[29] This was the reason why Prussian kings were so very much concerned with the strictest conservation of Jewish customs and religious rituals. In 1823 Frederick William III prohibited "the slightest renovations," and his successor, Frederick William IV, openly declared that "the state must not do anything which could further an amalgamation between the Jews and the other inhabitants" of his kingdom. Elbogen, *op. cit.,* pp. 223, 234.

[30] In a letter to *Kultusminister* v. Puttkammer in October, 1880. See also Herbert von Bismarck's letter of November, 1880, to Tiedemann. Both letters in Walter

The seeming equivocation with which government officials on the one hand protested against equality (especially professional equality) for the Jews, or complained somewhat later about Jewish influence in the press and yet, on the other, sincerely "wished them well in every respect," [31] was much more suited to the interests of the state than the earlier zeal of the reformer. After all, the Congress of Vienna had returned to Prussia the provinces in which the poor Jewish masses had lived for centuries, and nobody but a few intellectuals who dreamed of the French Revolution and the Rights of Man had ever thought of giving them the same status as their wealthy brethren—who certainly were the last to clamor for an equality by which they could only lose.[32] They knew as well as anybody else that "every legal or political measure for the emancipation of the Jews must necessarily lead to a deterioration of their civic and social situation." [33] And they knew better than anybody else how much their power depended upon their position and prestige within the Jewish communities. So they could hardly adopt any other policy but to "endeavor to get more influence for themselves, and keep their fellow Jews in their national isolation, pretending that this separation is part of their religion. Why? . . . Because the others should depend upon them even more, so that they, as *unsere Leute,* could be used exclusively by those in power." [34] And it did turn out that in the twentieth century, when emancipation was for the first time an accomplished fact for the Jewish masses, the power of the privileged Jews had disappeared.

Thus a perfect harmony of interests was established between the powerful Jews and the state. Rich Jews wanted and obtained control over their fellow Jews and segregation from non-Jewish society; the state could combine a policy of benevolence toward rich Jews with legal discrimination against the Jewish intelligentsia and furtherance of social segregation, as expressed in the conservative theory of the Christian essence of the state.

While antisemitism among the nobility remained without political consequence and subsided quickly in the decades of the Holy Alliance, liberals

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Frank, *Hofprediger Adolf Stoecker und die christlich-soziale Bewegung,* 1928, pp. 304, 305.

[31] August Varnhagen comments on a remark made by Frederick William IV. "The king was asked what he intended to do with the Jews. He replied: 'I wish them well in every respect, but I want them to feel that they are Jews.' These words provide a key to many things." *Tagebücher,* Leipzig, 1861, II, 113.

[32] That Jewish emancipation would have to be carried out against the desires of Jewish representatives was common knowledge in the eighteenth century. Mirabeau argued before the *Assemblée Nationale* in 1789: "Gentlemen, is it because the Jews don't want to be citizens that you don't proclaim them citizens? In a government like the one you now establish, all men must be men; you must expel all those who are not or who refuse to become men." The attitude of German Jews in the early nineteenth century is reported by J. M. Jost, *Neuere Geschichte der Israeliten. 1815-1845,* Berlin, 1846, Band 10.

[33] Adam Mueller (see *Ausgewählte Abhandlungen,* ed. by J. Baxa, Jena, 1921, p. 215) in a letter to Metternich in 1815.

[34] H. E. G. Paulus, *Die jüdische Nationalabsonderung nach Ursprung, Folgen und Besserungsmitteln,* 1831.

and radical intellectuals inspired and led a new movement immediately after the Congress of Vienna. Liberal opposition to Metternich's police regime on the continent and bitter attacks on the reactionary Prussian government led quickly to antisemitic outbursts and a veritable flood of anti-Jewish pamphlets. Precisely because they were much less candid and outspoken in their opposition to the government than the nobleman Marwitz had been a decade before, they attacked the Jews more than the government. Concerned mainly with equal opportunity and resenting most of all the revival of aristocratic privileges which limited their admission to the public services, they introduced into the discussion the distinction between individual Jews, "our brethren," and Jewry as a group, a distinction which from then on was to become the trademark of leftist antisemitism. Although they did not fully understand why and how the government, in its enforced independence from society, preserved and protected the Jews as a separate group, they knew well enough that some political connection existed and that the Jewish question was more than a problem of individual Jews and human tolerance. They coined the new nationalist phrases "state within the state," and "nation within the nation." Certainly wrong in the first instance, because the Jews had no political ambitions of their own and were merely the only social group that was unconditionally loyal to the state, they were half right in the second, because the Jews, taken as a social and not as a political body, actually did form a separate group within the nation.[35]

In Prussia, though not in Austria or in France, this radical antisemitism was almost as short-lived and inconsequential as the earlier antisemitism of nobility. The radicals were more and more absorbed by the liberalism of the economically rising middle classes, which all over Germany some twenty years later clamored in their diets for Jewish emancipation and for realization of political equality. It established, however, a certain theoretical and even literary tradition whose influence can be recognized in the famous anti-Jewish writings of the young Marx, who so frequently and unjustly has been accused of antisemitism. That the Jew, Karl Marx, could write the same way these anti-Jewish radicals did is only proof of how little this kind of anti-Jewish argument had in common with full-fledged antisemitism. Marx as an individual Jew was as little embarrassed by these arguments against "Jewry" as, for instance, Nietzsche was by his arguments against Germany. Marx, it is true, in his later years never wrote or uttered an opinion on the Jewish question; but this is hardly due to any fundamental change of mind. His exclusive preoccupation with class struggle as a phenomenon inside society, with the problems of capitalist production in which Jews were not involved as either buyers or sellers of labor, and his utter neglect of political questions, automatically prevented his further inspection of the state structure, and thereby of the role of the Jews. The strong influence of Marxism on the labor movement in Germany is among the chief reasons why German

[35] For a clear and reliable account of German antisemitism in the nineteenth century see Waldemar Gurian, "Antisemitism in Modern Germany," in *Essays on Anti-Semitism,* ed. by K. S. Pinson, 1946.

revolutionary movements showed so few signs of anti-Jewish sentiment.[36] The Jews were indeed of little or no importance for the social struggles of the time.

The beginnings of the modern antisemitic movement date back everywhere to the last third of the nineteenth century. In Germany, it began rather unexpectedly once more among the nobility, whose opposition to the state was again aroused by the transformation of the Prussian monarchy into a fell-fledged nation-state after 1871. Bismarck, the actual founder of the German Reich, had maintained close relations with Jews ever since he became Prime Minister; now he was denounced for being dependent upon and accepting bribes from the Jews. His attempt and partial success in abolishing most feudal remnants in the government inevitably resulted in conflict with the aristocracy; in their attack on Bismarck they represented him as either an innocent victim or a paid agent of Bleichroeder. Actually the relationship was the very opposite; Bleichroeder was undoubtedly a highly esteemed and well-paid agent of Bismarck.[37]

Feudal aristocracy, however, though still powerful enough to influence public opinion, was in itself neither strong nor important enough to start a real antisemitic movement like the one that began in the eighties. Their spokesman, Court Chaplain Stoecker, himself a son of lower middle-class parents, was a much less gifted representative of conservative interests than his predecessors, the romantic intellectuals who had formulated the main tenets of a conservative ideology some fifty years earlier. Moreover, he discovered the usefulness of antisemitic propaganda not through practical or theoretical considerations but by accident, when he, with the help of a great demagogic talent, found out it was highly useful for filling otherwise empty halls. But not only did he fail to understand his own sudden successes; as court chaplain and employee of both the royal family and the government, he was hardly in a position to use them properly. His enthusiastic audiences were composed exclusively of lower middle-class people, small shopkeepers and tradesmen, artisans and old-fashioned craftsmen. And the anti-Jewish sentiments of these people were not yet, and certainly not exclusively, motivated by a conflict with the state.

III: *The First Antisemitic Parties*

THE SIMULTANEOUS RISE of antisemitism as a serious political factor in Germany, Austria, and France in the last twenty years of the nineteenth cen-

[36] The only leftist German antisemite of any importance was E. Duehring who, in a confused way, invented a naturalistic explanation of a "Jewish race" in his *Die Judenfrage als Frage der Rassenschädlichkeit für Existenz, Sitte und Cultur der Völker mit einer weltgeschichtlichen Antwort,* 1880.

[37] For antisemitic attacks on Bismarck see Kurt Wawrzinek, *Die Entstehung der deutschen Antisemitenparteien. 1873-1890.* Historische Studien, Heft 168, 1927.

tury was preceded by a series of financial scandals and fraudulent affairs whose main source was an overproduction of ready capital. In France a majority of Parliament members and an incredible number of government officials were soon so deeply involved in swindle and bribery that the Third Republic was never to recover the prestige it lost during the first decades of its existence; in Austria and Germany the aristocracy was among the most compromised. In all three countries, Jews acted only as middlemen, and not a single Jewish house emerged with permanent wealth from the frauds of the Panama Affair and the *Gründungsschwindel.*

However, another group of people besides noblemen, government officials, and Jews were seriously involved in these fantastic investments whose promised profits were matched by incredible losses. This group consisted mainly of the lower middle classes, which now suddenly turned antisemitic. They had been more seriously hurt than any of the other groups: they had risked small savings and had been permanently ruined. There were important reasons for their gullibility. Capitalist expansion on the domestic scene tended more and more to liquidate small property-holders, to whom it had become a question of life or death to increase quickly the little they had, since they were only too likely to lose all. They were becoming aware that if they did not succeed in climbing upward into the bourgeoisie, they might sink down into the proletariat. Decades of general prosperity slowed down this development so considerably (though it did not change its trend) that their panic appears rather premature. For the time being, however, the anxiety of the lower middle classes corresponded exactly to Marx's prediction of their rapid dissolution.

The lower middle classes, or petty bourgeoisie, were the descendants of the guilds of artisans and tradesmen who for centuries had been protected against the hazards of life by a closed system which outlawed competition and was in the last instance under the protection of the state. They consequently blamed their misfortune upon the Manchester system, which had exposed them to the hardships of a competitive society and deprived them of all special protection and privileges granted by public authorities. They were, therefore, the first to clamor for the "welfare state," which they expected not only to shield them against emergencies but to keep them in the professions and callings they had inherited from their families. Since an outstanding characteristic of the century of free trade was the access of the Jews to all professions, it was almost a matter of course to think of the Jews as the representatives of the "applied system of Manchester carried out to the extreme," [38] even though nothing was farther from the truth.

This rather derivative resentment, which we find first in certain conservative writers who occasionally combined an attack on the bourgeoisie with an attack on Jews, received a great stimulus when those who had hoped for help from the government or gambled on miracles had to accept the

[38] Otto Glagau, *Der Bankrott des Nationalliberalismus und die Reaktion,* Berlin, 1878. The same author's *Der Boersen- und Gruendungsschwindel,* 1876, is one of the most important antisemitic pamphlets of the time.

rather dubious help of bankers. To the small shopkeeper the banker appeared to be the same kind of exploiter as the owner of a big industrial enterprise was to the worker. But while the European workers, from their own experience and a Marxist education in economics, knew that the capitalist filled the double function of exploiting them and giving them the opportunity to produce, the small shopkeeper had found nobody to enlighten him about his social and economic destiny. His predicament was even worse than the worker's and on the basis of his experience he considered the banker a parasite and usurer whom he had to make his silent partner, even though this banker, in contrast to the manufacturer, had nothing whatsoever to do with his business. It is not difficult to comprehend that a man who put his money solely and directly to the use of begetting more money can be hated more bitterly than the one who gets his profit through a lengthy and involved process of production. Since at that time nobody asked for credit if he could possibly help it—certainly not small tradesmen—bankers looked like the exploiters not of working power and productive capacity, but of misfortune and misery.

Many of these bankers were Jews and, even more important, the general figure of the banker bore definite Jewish traits for historical reasons. Thus the leftist movement of the lower middle class and the entire propaganda against banking capital turned more or less antisemitic, a development of little importance in industrial Germany but of great significance in France and, to a lesser extent, in Austria. For a while it looked as though the Jews had indeed for the first time come into direct conflict with another class without interference from the state. Within the framework of the nation-state, in which the function of the government was more or less defined by its ruling position above competing classes, such a clash might even have been a possible, if dangerous, way to normalize the Jewish position.

To this social-economic element, however, another was quickly added which in the long run proved to be more ominous. The position of the Jews as bankers depended not upon loans to small people in distress, but primarily on the issuance of state loans. Petty loans were left to the small fellows, who in this way prepared themselves for the more promising careers of their wealthier and more honorable brethren. The social resentment of the lower middle classes against the Jews turned into a highly explosive political element, because these bitterly hated Jews were thought to be well on their way to political power. Were they not only too well known for their relationship with the government in other respects? Social and economic hatred, on the other hand, reinforced the political argument with that driving violence which up to then it had lacked completely.

Friedrich Engels once remarked that the protagonists of the antisemitic movement of his time were noblemen, and its chorus the howling mob of the petty bourgeoisie. This is true not only for Germany, but also for Austria's Christian Socialism and France's Anti-Dreyfusards. In all these cases, the aristocracy, in a desperate last struggle, tried to ally itself with the conservative forces of the churches—the Catholic Church in Austria and France,

the Protestant Church in Germany—under the pretext of fighting liberalism with the weapons of Christianity. The mob was only a means to strengthen their position, to give their voices a greater resonance. Obviously they neither could nor wanted to organize the mob, and would dismiss it once their aim was achieved. But they discovered that antisemitic slogans were highly effective in mobilizing large strata of the population.

The followers of Court Chaplain Stoecker did not organize the first antisemitic parties in Germany. Once the appeal of antisemitic slogans had been demonstrated, radical antisemites at once separated themselves from Stoecker's Berlin movement, went into a full-scale fight against the government, and founded parties whose representatives in the Reichstag voted in all major domestic issues with the greatest opposition party, the Social Democrats.[39] They quickly got rid of the compromising initial alliance with the old powers; Boeckel, the first antisemitic member of Parliament, owed his seat to votes of the Hessian peasants whom he defended against "Junkers and Jews," that is against the nobility which owned too much land and against the Jews upon whose credit the peasants depended.

Small as these first antisemitic parties were, they at once distinguished themselves from all other parties. They made the original claim that they were not a party among parties but a party "above all parties." In the class- and party-ridden nation-state, only the state and the government had ever claimed to be above all parties and classes, to represent the nation as a whole. Parties were admittedly groups whose deputies represented the interests of their voters. Even though they fought for power, it was implicitly understood that it was up to the government to establish a balance between the conflicting interests and their representatives. The antisemitic parties' claim to be "above all parties" announced clearly their aspiration to become the representative of the whole nation, to get exclusive power, to take possession of the state machinery, to substitute themselves for the state. Since, on the other hand, they continued to be organized as a party, it was also clear that they wanted state power as a party, so that their voters would actually dominate the nation.

The body politic of the nation-state came into existence when no single group was any longer in a position to wield exclusive political power, so that the government assumed actual political rule which no longer depended upon social and economic factors. The revolutionary movements of the left, which fought for a radical change of social conditions, had never directly touched this supreme political authority. They had challenged only the power of the bourgeoisie and its influence upon the state, and were therefore always ready to submit to government guidance in foreign affairs, where the interests of an assumedly unified nation were at stake. The numerous programs of the antisemitic groups, on the other hand, were, from the beginning, chiefly concerned with foreign affairs; their revolutionary impulse was

[39] See Wawrzinek, *op. cit.* An instructive account of all these events, especially with respect to Court Chaplain Stoecker, in Frank, *op. cit.*

directed against the government rather than a social class, and they actually aimed to destroy the political pattern of the nation-state by means of a party organization.

The claim of a party to be beyond all parties had other, more significant, implications than antisemitism. If it had been only a question of getting rid of the Jews, Fritsch's proposal, at one of the early antisemitic congresses,[40] not to create a new party but rather to disseminate antisemitism until finally all existing parties were hostile to Jews, would have brought much quicker results. As it was, Fritsch's proposal went unheeded because antisemitism was then already an instrument for the liquidation not only of the Jews but of the body politic of the nation-state as well.

Nor was it an accident that the claim of the antisemitic parties coincided with the early stages of imperialism and found exact counterparts in certain trends in Great Britain which were free of antisemitism and in the highly antisemitic pan-movements on the Continent.[41] Only in Germany did these new trends spring directly from antisemitism as such, and antisemitic parties preceded and survived the formation of purely imperialist groups such as the Alldeutscher Verband and others, all of which also claimed to be more than and above party groups.

The fact that similar formations without active antisemitism—which avoided the charlatan aspect of the antisemitic parties and therefore seemed at first to have far better chances for final victory—were finally submerged or liquidated by the antisemitic movement is a good index to the importance of the issue. The antisemites' belief that their claim to exclusive rule was no more than what the Jews had in fact achieved, gave them the advantage of a domestic program, and conditions were such that one had to enter the arena of social struggle in order to win political power. They could pretend to fight the Jews exactly as the workers were fighting the bourgeoisie. Their advantage was that by attacking the Jews, who were believed to be the secret power behind governments, they could openly attack the state itself, whereas the imperialist groups, with their mild and secondary antipathy against Jews, never found the connection with the important social struggles of the times.

The second highly significant characteristic of the new antisemitic parties was that they started at once a supranational organization of all antisemitic groups in Europe, in open contrast to, and in defiance of, current nationalistic slogans. By introducing this supranational element, they clearly indicated that they aimed not only at political rule over the nation but had already planned a step further for an inter-European government "above all nations." [42] This second revolutionary element meant the fundamental break

[40] This proposition was made in 1886 in Cassel, where the *Deutsche Antisemitische Vereinigung* was founded.

[41] For an extensive discussion of the "parties above parties" and the pan-movements see chapter viii.

[42] The first international anti-Jewish congress took place in 1882 in Dresden, with about 3,000 delegates from Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia; during the discussions, Stoecker was defeated by the radical elements who met one year later in

with the status quo; it has been frequently overlooked because the antisemites themselves, partly because of traditional habits and partly because they consciously lied, used the language of the reactionary parties in their propaganda.

The intimate relationship between the peculiar conditions of Jewish existence and the ideology of such groups is even more evident in the organization of a group beyond nations than in the creation of a party beyond parties. The Jews very clearly were the only inter-European element in a nationalized Europe. It seemed only logical that their enemies had to organize on the same principle, if they were to fight those who were supposed to be the secret manipulators of the political destiny of all nations.

While this argument was sure to be convincing as propaganda, the success of supranational antisemitism depended upon more general considerations. Even at the end of the last century, and especially since the Franco-Prussian War, more and more people felt that the national organization of Europe was antiquated because it could no longer adequately respond to new economic challenges. This feeling had been a powerful supporting argument for the international organization of socialism and had, in turn, been strengthened by it. The conviction that identical interests existed all over Europe was spreading through the masses.[43] Whereas the international socialist organizations remained passive and uninterested in all foreign policy issues (that is in precisely those questions where their internationalism might have been tested), the antisemites started with problems of foreign policy and even promised solution of domestic problems on a supranational basis. To take ideologies less at their face value and to look more closely at the actual programs of the respective parties is to discover that the socialists, who were more concerned with domestic issues, fitted much better into the nation-state than the antisemites.

Of course this does not mean that the socialists' internationalist convictions were not sincere. These were, on the contrary, stronger and, incidentally, much older than the discovery of class interests which cut across the boundaries of national states. But the very awareness of the all-importance of class struggle induced them to neglect that heritage which the French Revolution had bequeathed to the workers' parties and which alone might have led them to an articulate political theory. The socialists kept implicitly intact the original concept of a "nation among nations," all of which belong to the family of mankind, but they never found a device by which to trans-

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Chemnitz and founded the Alliance Antijuive Universelle. A good account of these meetings and congresses, their programs and discussions, is to be found in Wawrzinek, *op. cit.*

[43] The international solidarity of the workers' movements was, as far as it went, an inter-European matter. Their indifference to foreign policy was also a kind of self-protection against both active participation in or struggle against the contemporary imperialist policies of their respective countries. As far as economic interests were concerned, it was all too obvious that everybody in the French or British or Dutch nation would feel the full impact of the fall of their empires, and not just capitalists and bankers.

form this idea into a working concept in the world of sovereign states. Their internationalism, consequently, remained a personal conviction shared by everybody, and their healthy disinterest in national sovereignty turned into a quite unhealthy and unrealistic indifference to foreign politics. Since the parties of the left did not object to nation-states on principle, but only to the aspect of national sovereignty; since, moreover, their own inarticulate hopes for federalist structures with eventual integration of all nations on equal terms somehow presupposed national liberty and independence of all oppressed peoples, they could operate within the framework of the nation-state and even emerge, in the time of decay of its social and political structure, as the only group in the population that did not indulge in expansionist fantasies and in thoughts of destroying other peoples.

The supranationalism of the antisemites approached the question of international organization from exactly the opposite point of view. Their aim was a dominating superstructure which would destroy all home-grown national structures alike. They could indulge in hypernationalistic talk even as they prepared to destroy the body politic of their own nation, because tribal nationalism, with its immoderate lust for conquest, was one of the principal powers by which to force open the narrow and modest limits of the nation-state and its sovereignty.[44] The more effective the chauvinistic propaganda, the easier it was to persuade public opinion of the necessity for a supranational structure which would rule from above and without national distinctions by a universal monopoly of power and the instruments of violence.

There is little doubt that the special inter-European condition of the Jewish people could have served the purposes of socialist federalism at least as well as it was to serve the sinister plots of supranationalists. But socialists were so concerned with class struggle and so neglectful of the political consequences of their own inherited concepts that they became aware of the existence of the Jews as a political factor only when they were already confronted with full-blown antisemitism as a serious competitor on the domestic scene. Then they were not only unprepared to integrate the Jewish issue into their theories, but actually afraid to touch the question at all. Here as in other international issues, they left the field to the supranationalists who could then seem to be the only ones who knew the answers to world problems.

By the turn of the century, the effects of the swindles in the seventies had run their course and an era of prosperity and general well-being, especially in Germany, put an end to the premature agitations of the eighties. Nobody could have predicted that this end was only a temporary respite, that all unsolved political questions, together with all unappeased political hatreds, were to redouble in force and violence after the first World War. The antisemitic parties in Germany, after initial successes, fell back into insignificance; their leaders, after a brief stirring of public opinion, disap-

[44] Compare chapter viii.

peared through the back door of history into the darkness of crackpot confusion and cure-all charlatanry.

IV: *Leftist Antisemitism*

WERE IT NOT for the frightful consequences of antisemitism in our own time, we might have given less attention to its development in Germany. As a political movement, nineteenth-century antisemitism can be studied best in France, where for almost a decade it dominated the political scene. As an ideological force, competing with other more respectable ideologies for the acceptance of public opinion, it reached its most articulate form in Austria.

Nowhere had the Jews rendered such great services to the state as in Austria, whose many nationalities were kept together only by the Dual Monarchy of the House of Hapsburg, and where the Jewish state banker, in contrast to all other European countries, survived the downfall of the monarchy. Just as at the beginning of this development in the early eighteenth century, Samuel Oppenheimer's credit had been identical with the credit of the House of Hapsburg, so "in the end Austrian credit was that of the *Creditanstalt*"—a Rothschild banking house.[45] Although the Danube monarchy had no homogeneous population, the most important prerequisite for evolution into a nation-state, it could not avoid the transformation of an enlightened despotism into a constitutional monarchy and the creation of modern civil services. This meant that it had to adopt certain institutions of the nation-state. For one thing, the modern class system grew along nationality lines, so that certain nationalities began to be identified with certain classes or at least professions. The German became the dominating nationality in much the same sense as the bourgeoisie became the dominating class in the nation-states. The Hungarian landed aristocracy played a role that was even more pronounced than, but essentially similar to, that played by the nobility in other countries. The state machinery itself tried its best to keep the same absolute distance from society, to rule above all nationalities, as the nation-state with respect to its classes. The result for the Jews was simply that the Jewish nationality could not merge with the others and could not become a nationality itself, just as it had not merged with other classes in the nation-state, or become a class itself. As the Jews in nation-states had differed from all classes of society through their special relationship to the state, so they differed from all other nationalities in Austria through their special relationship to the Hapsburg monarchy. And just as everywhere else each class that came into open conflict with the state turned antisemitic, so in Austria each nationality that not only engaged in the all-pervading struggle of the nationalities but came into open conflict with the monarchy

[45] See Paul H. Emden, "The Story of the Vienna *Creditanstalt*," in *Menorah Journal*, XXVIII, 1, 1940.

itself, started its fight with an attack upon the Jews. But there was a marked difference between these conflicts in Austria, and those in Germany and France. In Austria they were not only sharper, but at the outbreak of the first World War every single nationality, and that meant every stratum of society, was in opposition to the state, so that more than anywhere else in Western or Central Europe the population was imbued with active antisemitism.

Outstanding among these conflicts was the continuously rising state hostility of the German nationality, which accelerated after the foundation of the Reich and discovered the usefulness of antisemitic slogans after the financial crash of 1873. The social situation at that moment was practically the same as in Germany, but the social propaganda to catch the middle-class vote immediately indulged in a much more violent attack on the state, and a much more outspoken confession of nonloyalty to the country. Moreover, the German Liberal Party, under the leadership of Schoenerer, was from the beginning a lower middle-class party without connections or restraints from the side of the nobility, and with a decidedly left-wing outlook. It never achieved a real mass basis, but it was remarkably successful in the universities during the eighties where it organized the first closely knit students' organization on the basis of open antisemitism. Schoenerer's antisemitism, at first almost exclusively directed against the Rothschilds, won him the sympathies of the labor movement, which regarded him as a true radical gone astray.[46] His main advantage was that he could base his antisemitic propaganda on demonstrable facts: as a member of the Austrian Reichsrat he had fought for nationalization of the Austrian railroads, the major part of which had been in the hands of the Rothschilds since 1836 due to a state license which expired in 1886. Schoenerer succeeded in gathering 40,000 signatures against its renewal, and in placing the Jewish question in the limelight of public interest. The close connection between the Rothschilds and the financial interests of the monarchy became very obvious when the government tried to extend the license under conditions which were patently to the disadvantage of the state as well as the public. Schoenerer's agitation in this matter became the actual beginning of an articulate antisemitic movement in Austria.[47] The point is that this movement, in contrast to the German Stoecker agitation, was initiated and led by a man who was sincere beyond doubt, and therefore did not stop at the use of antisemitism as a propaganda weapon, but developed quickly that Pan-German ideology which was to influence Nazism more deeply than any other German brand of antisemitism.

[46] See F. A. Neuschaefer, *Georg Ritter von Schoenerer,* Hamburg, 1935, and Eduard Pichl, *Georg Schoenerer,* 1938, 6 vols. Even in 1912, when the Schoenerer agitation had long lost all significance, the Viennese *Arbeiterzeitung* cherished very affectionate feelings for the man of whom it could think only in the words Bismarck had once uttered about Lassalle: "And if we exchanged shots, justice would still demand that we admit even during the shooting: He is a man; and the others are old women." (Neuschaefer, p. 33.)

[47] See Neuschaefer, *op. cit.,* pp. 22 ff., and Pichl, *op. cit.,* I, 236 ff.

Though victorious in the long run, the Schoenerer movement was temporarily defeated by a second antisemitic party, the Christian-Socials under the leadership of Lueger. While Schoenerer had attacked the Catholic Church and its considerable influence on Austrian politics almost as much as he had the Jews, the Christian-Socials were a Catholic party who tried from the outset to ally themselves with those reactionary conservative forces which had proved so helpful in Germany and France. Since they made more social concessions, they were more successful than in Germany or in France. They, together with the Social Democrats, survived the downfall of the monarchy and became the most influential group in postwar Austria. But long before the establishment of an Austrian Republic, when, in the nineties, Lueger had won the Mayoralty of Vienna by an antisemitic campaign, the Christian-Socials already adopted that typically equivocal attitude toward the Jews in the nation-state—hostility to the intelligentsia and friendliness toward the Jewish business class. It was by no means an accident that, after a bitter and bloody contest for power with the socialist workers' movement, they took over the state machinery when Austria, reduced to its German nationality, was established as a nation-state. They turned out to be the only party which was prepared for exactly this role and, even under the old monarchy, had won popularity because of their nationalism. Since the Hapsburgs were a German house and had granted their German subjects a certain predominance, the Christian-Socials never attacked the monarchy. Their function was rather to win large parts of the German nationality for the support of an essentially unpopular government. Their antisemitism remained without consequence; the decades when Lueger ruled Vienna were actually a kind of golden age for the Jews. No matter how far their propaganda occasionally went in order to get votes, they never could have proclaimed with Schoenerer and the Pan-Germanists that "they regarded antisemitism as the mainstay of our national ideology, as the most essential expression of genuine popular conviction and thus as the major national achievement of the century."[48] And although they were as much under the influence of clerical circles as was the antisemitic movement in France, they were of necessity much more restrained in their attacks on the Jews because they did not attack the monarchy as the antisemites in France attacked the Third Republic.

The successes and failures of the two Austrian antisemitic parties show the scant relevance of social conflicts to the long-range issues of the time. Compared with the mobilization of all opponents to the government as such, the capturing of lower middle-class votes was a temporary phenomenon. Indeed, the backbone of Schoenerer's movement was in those German-speaking provinces without any Jewish population at all, where competition with Jews or hatred of Jewish bankers never existed. The survival of the Pan-Germanist movement and its violent antisemitism in these provinces, while it subsided in the urban centers, was merely due to the fact that these

[48] Quoted from Pichl, *op. cit.*, I, p. 26.

provinces were never reached to the same extent by the universal prosperity of the pre-war period which reconciled the urban population with the government.

The complete lack of loyalty to their own country and its government, for which the Pan-Germanists substituted an open loyalty to Bismarck's Reich, and the resulting concept of nationhood as something independent of state and territory, led the Schoenerer group to a veritable imperialist ideology in which lies the clue to its temporary weakness and its final strength. It is also the reason why the Pan-German party in Germany (the Alldeutschen), which never overstepped the limits of ordinary chauvinism, remained so extremely suspicious and reluctant to take the outstretched hands of their Austrian Germanist brothers. This Austrian movement aimed at more than rise to power as a party, more than the possession of the state machinery. It wanted a revolutionary reorganization of Central Europe in which the Germans of Austria, together with and strengthened by the Germans of Germany, would become the ruling people, in which all other peoples of the area would be kept in the same kind of semiservitude as the Slavonic nationalities in Austria. Because of this close affinity to imperialism and the fundamental change it brought to the concept of nationhood, we shall have to postpone the discussion of the Austrian Pan-Germanist movement. It is no longer, at least in its consequences, a mere nineteenth-century preparatory movement; it belongs, more than any other brand of antisemitism, to the course of events of our own century.

The exact opposite is true of French antisemitism. The Dreyfus Affair brings into the open all other elements of nineteenth-century antisemitism in its mere ideological and political aspects; it is the culmination of the antisemitism which grew out of the special conditions of the nation-state. Yet its violent form foreshadowed future developments, so that the main actors of the Affair sometimes seem to be staging a huge dress rehearsal for a performance that had to be put off for more than three decades. It drew together all the open or subterranean, political or social sources which had brought the Jewish question into a predominant position in the nineteenth century; its premature outburst, on the other hand, kept it within the framework of a typical nineteenth-century ideology which, although it survived all French governments and political crises, never quite fitted into twentieth-century political conditions. When, after the 1940 defeat, French antisemitism got its supreme chance under the Vichy government, it had a definitely antiquated and, for major purposes, rather useless character, which German Nazi writers never forgot to point out.[49] It had no influence on the formation of Nazism and remains more significant in itself than as an active historical factor in the final catastrophe.

The principal reason for these wholesome limitations was that France's antisemitic parties, though violent on the domestic scene, had no supra-

[49] See especially Walfried Vernunft, "Die Hintergründe des französischen Antisemitismus," in *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte,* Juni, 1939.

national aspirations. They belonged after all to the oldest and most fully developed nation-state in Europe. None of the antisemites ever tried seriously to organize a "party above parties" or to seize the state as a party and for no other purpose but party interests. The few attempted *coups d'état* which might be credited to the alliance between antisemites and higher army officers were ridiculously inadequate and obviously contrived.[50] In 1898 some nineteen members of Parliament were elected through antisemitic campaigns, but this was a peak which was never reached again and from which the decline was rapid.

It is true, on the other hand, that this was the earliest instance of the success of antisemitism as a catalytic agent for all other political issues. This can be attributed to the lack of authority of the Third Republic, which had been voted in with a very slight majority. In the eyes of the masses, the state had lost its prestige along with the monarchy, and attacks on the state were no longer a sacrilege. The early outburst of violence in France bears a striking resemblance to similar agitation in the Austrian and German Republics after the first World War. The Nazi dictatorship has been so frequently connected with so-called "state-worship" that even historians have become somewhat blind to the truism that the Nazis took advantage of the complete breakdown of state worship, originally prompted by the worship of a prince who sits on the throne by the grace of God, and which hardly ever occurs in a Republic. In France, fifty years before Central European countries were affected by this universal loss of reverence, state worship had suffered many defeats. It was much easier to attack the Jews and the government together there than in Central Europe where the Jews were attacked in order to attack the government.

French antisemitism, moreover, is as much older than its European counterparts as is French emancipation of the Jews, which dates back to the end of the eighteenth century. The representatives of the Age of Enlightenment who prepared the French Revolution despised the Jews as a matter of course; they saw in them the backward remnants of the Dark Ages, and they hated them as the financial agents of the aristocracy. The only articulate friends of the Jews in France were conservative writers who denounced anti-Jewish attitudes as "one of the favorite theses of the eighteenth century."[61] For the more liberal or radical writer it had become almost a tradition to warn against the Jews as barbarians who still lived in the patriarchal form of government and recognized no other state.[62] During and after the French Revolution, the French clergy and French aristocrats added their voices to the general anti-Jewish sentiment, though for other and more material reasons. They accused the revolutionary government of having ordered the sale of clerical property to pay "the Jews and merchants to whom the government

[50] See Chapter iv.

[51] See J. de Maistre, *Les Soirées de St. Petersburg,* 1821, II, 55.

[52] Charles Fourier, *Nouveau Monde Industriel,* 1829, Vol. V of his *Oeuvres Complètes,* 1841, p. 421. For Fourier's anti-Jewish doctrines, see also Edmund Silberner, "Charles Fourier on the Jewish Question" in *Jewish Social Studies,* October, 1946.

is indebted." [53] These old arguments, somehow kept alive through the never-ending struggle between Church and State in France, supported the general violence and embitterment which had been touched off by other and more modern forces at the end of the century.

Mainly because of the strong clerical support of antisemitism, the French socialist movement finally decided to take a stand against antisemitic propaganda in the Dreyfus Affair. Until then, however, nineteenth-century French leftist movements had been outspoken in their antipathy to the Jews. They simply followed the tradition of eighteenth-century enlightenment which was the source of French liberalism and radicalism, and they considered anti-Jewish attitudes an integral part of anticlericalism. These sentiments on the left were strengthened first by the fact that the Alsatian Jews continued to live from lending money to peasants, a practice which had already prompted Napoleon's decree of 1808. After conditions had changed in Alsace, leftist antisemitism found a new source of strength in the financial policies of the house of Rothschild, which played a large part in the financing of the Bourbons, maintained close connections with Louis Philippe, and flourished under Napoleon III.

Behind these obvious and rather superficial incentives to anti-Jewish attitudes there was a deeper cause, which was crucial to the whole structure of the specifically French brand of radicalism, and which almost succeeded in turning the whole French leftist movement against the Jews. Bankers were much stronger in the French economy than in other capitalist countries, and France's industrial development, after a brief rise during the reign of Napoleon III, lagged so far behind other nations that pre-capitalist socialist tendencies continued to exert considerable influence. The lower middle classes which in Germany and Austria became antisemitic only during the seventies and eighties, when they were already so desperate that they could be used for reactionary politics as well as for the new mob policies, had been antisemitic in France some fifty years earlier, when, with the help of the working class, they carried the revolution of 1848 to a brief victory. In the forties, when Toussenel published his *Les Juifs, Rois de l'Epoque,* the most important book in a veritable flood of pamphlets against the Rothschilds, it was enthusiastically received by the entire left-wing press, which at the time was the organ of the revolutionary lower middle classes. Their sentiments, as expressed by Toussenel, though less articulate and less sophisticated, were not very different from those of the young Marx, and Toussenel's attack on the Rothschilds was only a less gifted and more elaborate variation of the letters from Paris which Boerne had written fifteen years before.[54] These Jews, too, mistook the Jewish banker for a

[53] See the newspaper *Le Patriote Français,* No. 457, November 8, 1790. Quoted from Clemens August Hoberg, "Die geistigen Grundlagen des Antisemitismus im modernen Frankreich," in *Forschungen zur Judenfrage,* 1940, Vol. IV.

[54] Marx's essay on the Jewish question is sufficiently well known not to warrant quotation. Since Boerne's utterances, because of their merely polemical and untheoretical character, are being forgotten today, we quote from the 72nd letter from

central figure in the capitalist system, an error which has exerted a certain influence on the municipal and lower government bureaucracy in France up to our own time.[55]

However this outburst of popular anti-Jewish feeling, nourished by an economic conflict between Jewish bankers and their desperate clientele, lasted no longer as an important factor in politics than similar outbursts with purely economic or social causes. The twenty years of Napoleon III's rule over a French Empire were an age of prosperity and security for French Jewry much like the two decades before the outbreak of the first World War in Germany and Austria.

The only brand of French antisemitism which actually remained strong, and outlasted social antisemitism as well as the contemptuous attitudes of anticlerical intellectuals, was tied up with a general xenophobia. Especially after the first World War, foreign Jews became the stereotypes for all foreigners. A differentiation between native Jews and those who "invaded" the country from the East has been made in all Western and Central European countries. Polish and Russian Jews were treated exactly the same way in Germany and Austria as Rumanian and German Jews were treated in France, just as Jews from Posen in Germany or from Galicia in Austria were regarded with the same snobbish contempt as Jews from Alsace were in France. But only in France did this differentiation assume such importance on the domestic scene. And this is probably due to the fact that the Rothschilds, who more than anywhere else were the butt of anti-Jewish attacks, had immigrated into France from Germany, so that up to the outbreak of the second World War it became natural to suspect the Jews of sympathies with the national enemy.

Nationalistic antisemitism, harmless when compared with modern movements, was never a monopoly of reactionaries and chauvinists in France. On this point, the writer Jean Giraudoux, the propaganda minister in Daladier's war cabinet, was in complete agreement[56] with Pétain and the

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Paris (January, 1832): "Rothschild kissed the Pope's hand. . . . At last the order has come which God had planned when he created the world. A poor Christian kisses the Pope's feet, and a rich Jew kisses his hand. If Rothschild had gotten his Roman loan at 60 per cent, instead of 65, and could have sent the cardinal-chamberlain more than ten thousand ducats, they would have allowed him to embrace the Holy Father. . . . Would it not be the greatest luck for the world if all kings were deposed and the Rothschild family placed on the throne?" *Briefe aus Paris. 1830-1833.*

[55] This attitude is well described in the preface by the municipal councilor Paul Brousse to Cesare Lombroso's famous work on antisemitism (1899). The characteristic part of the argument is contained in the following: "The small shopkeeper needs credit, and we know how badly organized and how expensive credit is these days. Here too the small merchant places the responsibility on the Jewish banker. All the way down to the worker—*i.e.* only those workers who have no clear notion of scientific socialism—everybody thinks the revolution is being advanced if the general expropriation of capitalists is preceded by the expropriation of Jewish capitalists, who are the most typical and whose names are the most familiar to the masses."

[56] For the surprising continuity in French antisemitic arguments, compare, for instance, Charles Fourier's picture of the Jew "Iscariote" who arrives in France with 100,000 pounds, establishes himself in a town with six competitors in his field,

Vichy government, which also, no matter how hard it tried to please the Germans, could not break through the limitations of this outmoded antipathy for Jews. The failure was all the more conspicuous since the French had produced an outstanding antisemite who realized the full range and possibilities of the new weapon. That this man should be a prominent novelist is characteristic of conditions in France, where antisemitism in general had never fallen into the same social and intellectual disrepute as in other European countries.

Louis Ferdinand Céline had a simple thesis, ingenious and containing exactly the ideological imagination that the more rational French antisemitism had lacked. He claimed that the Jews had prevented the evolution of Europe into a political entity, had caused all European wars since 843, and had plotted the ruin of both France and Germany by inciting their mutual hostility. Céline proposed this fantastic explanation of history in his *Ecole des Cadavres,* written at the time of the Munich pact and published during the first months of the war. An earlier pamphlet on the subject, *Bagatelle pour un Massacre* (1938), although it did not include the new key to European history, was already remarkably modern in its approach; it avoided all restricting differentiations between native and foreign Jews, between good and bad ones, and did not bother with elaborate legislative proposals (a particular characteristic of French antisemitism), but went straight to the core of the matter and demanded the massacre of all Jews.

Céline's first book was very favorably received by France's leading intellectuals, who were half pleased by the attack on the Jews and half convinced that it was nothing more than an interesting new literary fancy.[57] For exactly the same reasons French home-grown Fascists did not take Céline seriously, despite the fact that the Nazis always knew he was the only true antisemite in France. The inherent good sense of French politicians and their deep-rooted respectability prevented their accepting a charlatan and crackpot. The result was that even the Germans, who knew better, had to continue to use such inadequate supporters as Doriot, a follower of Mussolini, and Pétain, an old French chauvinist with no comprehension whatever of modern problems, in their vain efforts to persuade the French people that extermination of the Jews would be a cure for everything under the sun. The way this situation developed during the years of French official,

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crushes all the competing houses, amasses a great fortune, and returns to Germany (in *Théorie des quatre mouvements,* 1808, *Oeuvres Complètes,* 88 ff.) with Giraudoux's picture of 1939: "By an infiltration whose secret I have tried in vain to detect, hundreds of thousands of Ashkenasim, who escaped from the Polish and Rumanian Ghettos, have entered our country . . . eliminating our fellow citizens and, at the same time, ruining their professional customs and traditions . . . and defying all investigations of census, taxes and labor." In *Pleins Pouvoirs,* 1939.

[57] See especially the critical discussion in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* by Marcel Arland (February, 1938) who claims that Céline's position is essentially *"solide."* André Gide (April, 1938) thinks that Céline in depicting only the Jewish *"spécialité,"* has succeeded in painting not the reality but the very hallucination which reality provokes.

and even unofficial, readiness to co-operate with Nazi Germany, clearly indicates how ineffective nineteenth-century antisemitism was to the new political purposes of the twentieth, even in a country where it had reached its fullest development and had survived all other changes in public opinion. It did not matter that able nineteenth-century journalists like Edouard Drumont, and even great contemporary writers like Georges Bernanos, contributed to a cause that was much more adequately served by crackpots and charlatans.

That France, for various reasons, never developed a full-fledged imperialist party turned out to be the decisive element. As many French colonial politicians have pointed out,[58] only a French-German alliance would have enabled France to compete with England in the division of the world and to join successfully in the scramble for Africa. Yet France somehow never let herself be tempted into this competition, despite all her noisy resentment and hostility against Great Britain. France was and remained—though declining in importance—the *nation par excellence* on the Continent, and even her feeble imperialist attempts usually ended with the birth of new national independence movements. Since, moreover, her antisemitism had been nourished principally by the purely national French-German conflict, the Jewish issue was almost automatically kept from playing much of a role in imperialist policies, despite the conditions in Algeria, whose mixed population of native Jews and Arabs would have offered an excellent opportunity.[59] The simple and brutal destruction of the French nation-state by German aggression, the mockery of a German-French alliance on the basis of German occupation and French defeat, may have proved how little strength of her own the *nation par excellence* had carried into our times from a glorious past; it did not change her essential political structure.

V: *The Golden Age of Security*

ONLY TWO DECADES separated the temporary decline of the antisemitic movements from the outbreak of the first World War. This period has been adequately described as a "Golden Age of Security" [60] because only a few who lived in it felt the inherent weakness of an obviously outmoded political structure which, despite all prophecies of imminent doom, continued to function in spurious splendor and with inexplicable, monotonous stubbornness. Side by side, and apparently with equal stability, an anachronistic despotism in Russia, a corrupt bureaucracy in Austria, a stupid militarism

[58] See for instance René Pinon, *France et Allemagne,* 1912.

[59] Some aspects of the Jewish question in Algeria are treated in the author's article, "Why the Crémieux Decree was Abrogated," in *Contemporary Jewish Record,* April, 1943.

[60] The term is Stefan Zweig's, who thus named the period up to the first World War in *The World of Yesterday: An Autobiography,* 1943.

in Germany and a half-hearted Republic in continual crisis in France—all of them still under the shadow of the world-wide power of the British Empire—managed to carry on. None of these governments was especially popular, and all faced growing domestic opposition; but nowhere did there seem to exist an earnest political will for radical change in political conditions. Europe was much too busy expanding economically for any nation or social stratum to take political questions seriously. Everything could go on because nobody cared. Or, in the penetrating words of Chesterton, "everything is prolonging its existence by denying that it exists." [61]

The enormous growth of industrial and economic capacity produced a steady weakening of purely political factors, while at the same time economic forces became dominant in the international play of power. Power was thought to be synonymous with economic capacity before people discovered that economic and industrial capacity are only its modern prerequisites. In a sense, economic power could bring governments to heel because they had the same faith in economics as the plain businessmen who had somehow convinced them that the state's means of violence had to be used exclusively for protection of business interests and national property. For a very brief time, there was some truth in Walter Rathenau's remark that 300 men, who all know each other, held the destinies of the world in their hands. This odd state of affairs lasted exactly until 1914 when, through the very fact of war, the confidence of the masses in the providential character of economic expansion fell apart.

The Jews were more deluded by the appearances of the golden age of security than any other section of the European peoples. Antisemitism seemed to be a thing of the past; the more the governments lost in power and prestige, the less attention was paid to the Jews. While the state played an ever narrower and emptier representative role, political representation tended to become a kind of theatrical performance of varying quality until in Austria the theater itself became the focus of national life, an institution whose public significance was certainly greater than that of Parliament. The theatrical quality of the political world had become so patent that the theater could appear as the realm of reality.

The growing influence of big business on the state and the state's declining need for Jewish services threatened the Jewish banker with extinction and forced certain shifts in Jewish occupations. The first sign of the decline of the Jewish banking houses was their loss of prestige and power within the Jewish communities. They were no longer strong enough to centralize and, to a certain extent, monopolize the general Jewish wealth. More and more Jews left state finance for independent business. Out of food and clothing deliveries to armies and governments grew the Jewish food and grain commerce, and the garment industries in which they soon acquired a prominent position in all countries; pawnshops and general stores in small

[61] For a wonderful description of the British state of affairs, see G. K. Chesterton, *The Return of Don Quixote,* which did not appear until 1927 but was "planned and partly written before the War."

country towns were the predecessors of department stores in the cities. This does not mean that the relationship between Jews and governments ceased to exist, but fewer individuals were involved, so that at the end of this period we have almost the same picture as at the beginning: a few Jewish individuals in important financial positions with little or no connection with the broader strata of the Jewish middle class.

More important than the expansion of the independent Jewish business class was another shift in the occupational structure. Central and Western European Jewries had reached a saturation point in wealth and economic fortune. This might have been the moment for them to show that they actually wanted money for money's or for power's sake. In the former case, they might have expanded their businesses and handed them down to their descendants; in the latter they might have entrenched themselves more firmly in state business and fought the influence of big business and industry on governments. But they did neither. On the contrary, the sons of the well-to-do businessmen and, to a lesser extent, bankers, deserted their fathers' careers for the liberal professions or purely intellectual pursuits they had not been able to afford a few generations before. What the nation-state had once feared so much, the birth of a Jewish intelligentsia, now proceeded at a fantastic pace. The crowding of Jewish sons of well-to-do parents into the cultural occupations was especially marked in Germany and Austria, where a great proportion of cultural institutions, like newspapers, publishing, music, and theater, became Jewish enterprises.

What had been made possible through the traditional Jewish preference and respect for intellectual occupations resulted in a real break with tradition and the intellectual assimilation and nationalization of important strata of Western and Central European Jewry. Politically, it indicated emancipation of Jews from state protection, growing consciousness of a common destiny with their fellow-citizens, and a considerable loosening of the ties that had made Jews an inter-European element. Socially, the Jewish intellectuals were the first who, as a group, needed and wanted admittance to non-Jewish society. Social discrimination, a small matter to their fathers who had not cared for social intercourse with Gentiles, became a paramount problem for them.

Searching for a road into society, this group was forced to accept social behavior patterns set by individual Jews who had been admitted into society during the nineteenth century as exceptions to the rule of discrimination. They quickly discovered the force that would open all doors, the "radiant Power of Fame" (Stefan Zweig), which a hundred years' idolatry of genius had made irresistible. What distinguished the Jewish pursuit of fame from the general fame idolatry of the time was that Jews were not primarily interested in it for themselves. To live in the aura of fame was more important than to become famous; thus they became outstanding reviewers, critics, collectors, and organizers of what was famous. The "radiant power" was a very real social force by which the socially homeless were able to establish a home. The Jewish intellectuals, in other words, tried, and to a certain

extent succeeded, in becoming the living tie binding famous individuals into a society of the renowned, an international society by definition, for spiritual achievement transcends national boundaries. The general weakening of political factors, for two decades having brought about a situation in which reality and appearance, political reality and theatrical performance could easily parody each other, now enabled them to become the representatives of a nebulous international society in which national prejudices no longer seemed valid. And paradoxically enough, this international society seemed to be the only one that recognized the nationalization and assimilation of its Jewish members; it was far easier for an Austrian Jew to be accepted as an Austrian in France than in Austria. The spurious world citizenship of this generation, this fictitious nationality which they claimed as soon as their Jewish origin was mentioned, in part already resembled those passports which later granted their owner the right to sojourn in every country except the one that issued it.

By their very nature, these circumstances could not but bring Jews into prominence just when their activities, their satisfaction and happiness in the world of appearance, proved that, as a group, they wanted in fact neither money nor power. While serious statesmen and publicists now bothered with the Jewish question less than at any time since the emancipation, and while antisemitism almost entirely disappeared from the open political scene, Jews became the symbols of Society as such and the objects of hatred for all those whom society did not accept. Antisemitism, having lost its ground in the special conditions that had influenced its development during the nineteenth century, could be freely elaborated by charlatans and crackpots into that weird mixture of half-truths and wild superstitions which emerged in Europe after 1914, the ideology of all frustrated and resentful elements.

Since the Jewish question in its social aspect turned into a catalyst of social unrest, until finally a disintegrated society recrystallized ideologically around a possible massacre of Jews, it is necessary to outline some of the main traits of the social history of emancipated Jewry in the bourgeois society of the last century.

CHAPTER THREE: The Jews and Society

THE JEWS' political ignorance, which fitted them so well for their special role and for taking roots in the state's sphere of business, and their prejudices against the people and in favor of authority, which blinded them to the political dangers of antisemitism, caused them to be oversensitive toward all forms of social discrimination. It was difficult to see the decisive difference between political argument and mere antipathy when the two developed side by side. The point, however, is that they grew out of exactly opposite aspects of emancipation: political antisemitism developed because the Jews were a separate body, while social discrimination arose because of the growing equality of Jews with all other groups.

Equality of condition, though it is certainly a basic requirement for justice, is nevertheless among the greatest and most uncertain ventures of modern mankind. The more equal conditions are, the less explanation there is for the differences that actually exist between people; and thus all the more unequal do individuals and groups become. This perplexing consequence came fully to light as soon as equality was no longer seen in terms of an omnipotent being like God or an unavoidable common destiny like death. Whenever equality becomes a mundane fact in itself, without any gauge by which it may be measured or explained, then there is one chance in a hundred that it will be recognized simply as a working principle of a political organization in which otherwise unequal people have equal rights; there are ninety-nine chances that it will be mistaken for an innate quality of every individual, who is "normal" if he is like everybody else and "abnormal" if he happens to be different. This perversion of equality from a political into a social concept is all the more dangerous when a society leaves but little space for special groups and individuals, for then their differences become all the more conspicuous.

The great challenge to the modern period, and its peculiar danger, has been that in it man for the first time confronted man without the protection of differing circumstances and conditions. And it has been precisely this new concept of equality that has made modern race relations so difficult, for there we deal with natural differences which by no possible and conceivable change of conditions can become less conspicuous. It is because equality demands that I recognize each and every individual as my equal, that the conflicts between different groups, which for reasons of their own are reluctant to grant each other this basic equality, take on such terribly cruel forms.

Hence the more equal the Jewish condition, the more surprising were Jewish differences. This new awareness led to social resentment against the Jews and at the same time to a peculiar attraction toward them; the combined reactions determined the social history of Western Jewry. Discrimination, however, as well as attraction, were politically sterile. They neither produced a political movement against the Jews nor served in any way to protect them against their enemies. They did succeed, though, in poisoning the social atmosphere, in perverting all social intercourse between Jews and Gentiles, and had a definite effect on Jewish behavior. The formation of a Jewish type was due to both—to special discrimination and to special favor.

Social antipathy for Jews, with its varying forms of discrimination, did no great political harm in European countries, for genuine social and economic equality was never achieved. To all appearances new classes developed as groups to which one belonged by birth. There is no doubt that it was only in such a framework that society could suffer the Jews to establish themselves as a special clique.

The situation would have been entirely different if, as in the United States, equality of condition had been taken for granted; if every member of society—from whatever stratum—had been firmly convinced that by ability and luck he might become the hero of a success story. In such a society, discrimination becomes the only means of distinction, a kind of universal law according to which groups may find themselves outside the sphere of civic, political, and economic equality. Where discrimination is not tied up with the Jewish issue only, it can become a crystallization point for a political movement that wants to solve all the natural difficulties and conflicts of a multinational country by violence, mob rule, and the sheer vulgarity of race concepts. It is one of the most promising and dangerous paradoxes of the American Republic that it dared to realize equality on the basis of the most unequal population in the world, physically and historically. In the United States, social antisemitism may one day become the very dangerous nucleus for a political movement.[1] In Europe, however, it had little influence on the rise of political antisemitism.

[1] Although Jews stood out more than other groups in the homogeneous populations of European countries, it does not follow that they are more threatened by discrimination than other groups in America. In fact, up to now, not the Jews but the Negroes—by nature and history the most unequal among the peoples of America—have borne the burden of social and economic discrimination.

This could change, however, if a political movement ever grew out of this merely social discrimination. Then Jews might very suddenly become the principal objects of hatred for the simple reason that they, alone among all other groups, have themselves, within their history and their religion, expressed a well-known principle of separation. This is not true of the Negroes or Chinese, who are therefore less endangered politically, even though they may differ more from the majority than the Jews.

1: *Between Pariah and Parvenu*

THE PRECARIOUS balance between society and state, upon which the nation-state rested socially and politically, brought about a peculiar law governing Jewish admission to society. During the 150 years when Jews truly lived amidst, and not just in the neighborhood of, Western European peoples, they always had to pay with political misery for social glory and with social insult for political success. Assimilation, in the sense of acceptance by non-Jewish society, was granted them only as long as they were clearly distinguished exceptions from the Jewish masses even though they still shared the same restricted and humiliating political conditions, or later only when, after an accomplished emancipation and resulting social isolation, their political status was already challenged by antisemitic movements. Society, confronted with political, economic, and legal equality for Jews, made it quite clear that none of its classes was prepared to grant them social equality, and that only exceptions from the Jewish people would be received. Jews who heard the strange compliment that they were exceptions, exceptional Jews, knew quite well that it was this very ambiguity—that they were Jews and yet presumably not *like* Jews—which opened the doors of society to them. If they desired this kind of intercourse, they tried, therefore, "to be and yet not to be Jews." [2]

The seeming paradox had a solid basis in fact. What non-Jewish society demanded was that the newcomer be as "educated" as itself, and that, although he not behave like an "ordinary Jew," he be and produce something out of the ordinary, since, after all, he was a Jew. All advocates of emancipation called for assimilation, that is, adjustment to and reception by, society, which they considered either a preliminary condition to Jewish emancipation or its automatic consequence. In other words, whenever those who actually tried to improve Jewish conditions attempted to think of the Jewish question from the point of view of the Jews themselves, they immediately approached it merely in its social aspect. It has been one of the most unfortunate facts in the history of the Jewish people that only its enemies, and almost never its friends, understood that the Jewish question was a political one.

The defenders of emancipation tended to present the problem as one of "education," a concept which originally applied to Jews as well as non-Jews.[3] It was taken for granted that the vanguard in both camps would con-

[2] This surprisingly apt observation was made by the liberal Protestant theologian H. E. G. Paulus in a valuable little pamphlet, *Die jüdische Nationalabsonderung nach Ursprung, Folgen und Besserungsmitteln,* 1831. Paulus, much attacked by Jewish writers of the time, advocated a gradual individual emancipation on the basis of assimilation.

[3] This attitude is expressed in Wilhelm v. Humboldt's "Expert Opinion" of 1809: "The state should not exactly teach respect for the Jews, but should abolish an in-

sist of specially "educated," tolerant, cultured persons. It followed, of course, that the particularly tolerant, educated and cultured non-Jews could be bothered socially only with exceptionally educated Jews. As a matter of course, the demand, among the educated, for the abolition of prejudice was very quickly to become a rather one-sided affair, until only the Jews, finally, were urged to educate themselves.

This, however, is only one side of the matter. Jews were exhorted to become educated enough not to behave like ordinary Jews, but they were, on the other hand, accepted only because they were Jews, because of their foreign, exotic appeal. In the eighteenth century, this had its source in the new humanism which expressly wanted "new specimens of humanity" (Herder), intercourse with whom would serve as an example of possible intimacy with all types of mankind. To the enlightened Berlin of Mendelssohn's time, the Jews served as living proof that all men are human. For this generation, friendship with Mendelssohn or Markus Herz was an ever-renewed demonstration of the dignity of man. And because Jews were a despised and oppressed people, they were for it an even purer and more exemplary model of mankind. It was Herder, an outspoken friend of the Jews, who first used the later misused and misquoted phrase, "strange people of Asia driven into our regions." [4] With these words, he and his fellow-humanists greeted the "new specimens of humanity" for whom the eighteenth century had "searched the earth," [5] only to find them in their age-old neighbors. Eager to stress the basic unity of mankind, they wanted to show the origins of the Jewish people as more alien, and hence more exotic, than they actually were, so that the demonstration of humanity as a universal principle might be more effective.

For a few decades at the turn of the eighteenth century, when French Jewry already enjoyed emancipation and German Jewry had almost no hope or desire for it, Prussia's enlightened intelligentsia made "Jews all over the world turn their eyes to the Jewish community in Berlin" [6] (and not in Paris!). Much of this was due to the success of Lessing's *Nathan the Wise,* or to its misinterpretation, which held that the "new specimens of humanity," because they had become examples of mankind, must also be more intensely human individuals.[7] Mirabeau was strongly influenced by this idea and used to cite Mendelssohn as his example.[8] Herder hoped that educated Jews would

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human and prejudiced way of thinking etc. . . ." In Ismar Freund, *Die Emancipation der Juden in Preussen,* Berlin, 1912, II, 270.

[4] J. G. Herder, "Über die politische Bekehrung der Juden" in *Adrastea und das 18. Jahrhundert,* 1801-03.

[5] Herder, *Briefe zur Beförderung der Humanität* (1793-97), 40. Brief.

[6] Felix Priebatsch, "Die Judenpolitik des fürstlichen Absolutismus im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert," in *Forschungen und Versuche zur Geschichte des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit,* 1915, p. 646.

[7] Lessing himself had no such illusions. His last letter to Moses Mendelssohn expressed most clearly what he wanted: "the shortest and safest way to that European country without either Christians or Jews." For Lessing's attitude toward Jews, see Franz Mehring, *Die Lessinglegende,* 1906.

[8] See Honoré Q. R. de Mirabeau, *Sur Moses Mendelssohn,* London, 1788.

show a greater freedom from prejudice because "the Jew is free of certain political judgments which it is very hard or impossible for us to abandon." Protesting against the habit of the time of granting "concessions of new mercantile advantages," he proposed education as the true road to emancipation of Jews from Judaism, from "the old and proud national prejudices, . . . customs that do not belong to our age and constitutions," so that Jews could become "purely humanized," and of service to "the development of the sciences and the entire culture of mankind." [9] At about the same time, Goethe wrote in a review of a book of poems that their author, a Polish Jew, did "not achieve more than a Christian *étudiant en belles lettres,*" and complained that where he had expected something genuinely new, some force beyond shallow convention, he had found ordinary mediocrity.[10]

One can hardly overestimate the disastrous effect of this exaggerated good will on the newly Westernized, educated Jews and the impact it had on their social and psychological position. Not only were they faced with the demoralizing demand that they be exceptions to their own people, recognize "the sharp difference between them and the others," and ask that such "separation . . . be also legalized" by the governments; [11] they were expected even to become exceptional specimens of humanity. And since this, and not Heine's conversion, constituted the true "ticket of admission" into cultured European society, what else could these and future generations of Jews do but try desperately not to disappoint anybody? [12]

In the early decades of this entry into society, when assimilation had not yet become a tradition to follow, but something achieved by few and exceptionally gifted individuals, it worked very well indeed. While France was the land of political glory for the Jews, the first to recognize them as citizens, Prussia seemed on the way to becoming the country of social splendor. Enlightened Berlin, where Mendelssohn had established close connections with many famous men of his time, was only a beginning. His connections with non-Jewish society still had much in common with the scholarly ties that had bound Jewish and Christian learned men together in nearly all periods of European history. The new and surprising element was that

[9] J. G. Herder, "Ueber die politische Bekehrung der Juden," *op. cit.*

[10] Johann Wolfgang v. Goethe's review of Isachar Falkensohn Behr, *Gedichte eines polnischen Juden,* Mietau and Leipzig, 1772, in *Frankfurter Gelehrte Anzeigen.*

[11] Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Briefe bei Gelegenheit der politisch theologischen Aufgabe und des Sendschreibens jüdischer Hausväter,* 1799, in *Werke,* 1846, Abt. I, Band V, 34.

[12] This does not, however, apply to Moses Mendelssohn, who hardly knew the thoughts of Herder, Goethe, Schleiermacher, and other members of the younger generation. Mendelssohn was revered for his uniqueness. His firm adherence to his Jewish religion made it impossible for him to break ultimately with the Jewish people, which his successors did as a matter of course. He felt he was "a member of an oppressed people who must beg for the good will and protection of the governing nation" (see his "Letter to Lavater," 1770, in *Gesammelte Schriften,* Vol. VII, Berlin, 1930); that is, he always knew that the extraordinary esteem for his person paralleled an extraordinary contempt for his people. Since he, unlike Jews of following generations, did not share this contempt, he did not consider himself an exception.

Mendelssohn's friends used these relationships for nonpersonal, ideological, or even political purposes. He himself explicitly disavowed all such ulterior motives and expressed time and again his complete satisfaction with the conditions under which he had to live, as though he had foreseen that his exceptional social status and freedom had something to do with the fact that he still belonged to "the lowliest inhabitants of the (Prussian king's) domain." [13]

This indifference to political and civil rights survived Mendelssohn's innocent relationships with the learned and enlightened men of his time; it was carried later into the salons of those Jewish women who gathered together the most brilliant society Berlin was ever to see. Not until after the Prussian defeat of 1806, when the introduction of Napoleonic legislation into large regions of Germany put the question of Jewish emancipation on the agenda of public discussion, did this indifference change into outright fear. Emancipation would liberate the educated Jews, together with the "backward" Jewish people, and their equality would wipe out that precious distinction, upon which, as they were very well aware, their social status was based. When the emancipation finally came to pass, most assimilated Jews escaped into conversion to Christianity, characteristically finding it bearable and not dangerous to be Jews before emancipation, but not after.

Most representative of these salons, and the genuinely mixed society they brought together in Germany, was that of Rahel Varnhagen. Her original, unspoiled, and unconventional intelligence, combined with an absorbing interest in people and a truly passionate nature, made her the most brilliant and the most interesting of these Jewish women. The modest but famous soirées in Rahel's "garret" brought together "enlightened" aristocrats, middle-class intellectuals, and actors—that is, all those who, like the Jews, did not belong to respectable society. Thus Rahel's salon, by definition and intentionally, was established on the fringe of society, and did not share any of its conventions or prejudices.

It is amusing to note how closely the assimilation of Jews into society followed the precepts Goethe had proposed for the education of his *Wilhelm Meister,* a novel which was to become the great model of middle-class education. In this book the young burgher is educated by noblemen and

[13] The Prussia which Lessing had described as "Europe's most enslaved country" was to Mendelssohn "a state in which one of the wisest princes who ever ruled men has made the arts and sciences flourish, has made national freedom of thought so general that its beneficent effects reach even the lowliest inhabitants of his domain." Such humble contentment is touching and surprising if one realizes that the "wisest prince" had made it very hard for the Jewish philosopher to get permission to sojourn in Berlin and, at a time when his *Münzjuden* enjoyed all privileges, did not even grant him the regular status of a "protected Jew." Mendelssohn was even aware that he, the friend of all educated Germany, would be subject to the same tax levied upon an ox led to the market if ever he decided to visit his friend Lavater in Leipzig, but no political conclusion regarding the improvement of such conditions ever occurred to him. (See the "Letter to Lavater," *op. cit.,* and his preface to his translation of Menasseh Ben Israel in *Gesammelte Schriften,* Vol. III, Leipzig, 1843-45.)

actors, so that he may learn how to present and represent his individuality, and thereby advance from the modest status of a burgher's son into a nobleman. For the middle classes and for the Jews, that is, for those who were actually outside of high aristocratic society, everything depended upon "personality" and the ability to express it. To know how to play the role of what one actually was, seemed the most important thing. The peculiar fact that in Germany the Jewish question was held to be a question of education was closely connected with this early start and had its consequence in the educational philistinism of both the Jewish and non-Jewish middle classes, and also in the crowding of Jews into the liberal professions.

The charm of the early Berlin salons was that nothing really mattered but personality and the uniqueness of character, talent, and expression. Such uniqueness, which alone made possible an almost unbounded communication and unrestricted intimacy, could be replaced neither by rank, money, success, nor literary fame. The brief encounter of true personalities, which joined a Hohenzollern prince, Louis Ferdinand, to the banker Abraham Mendelssohn; or a political publicist and diplomat, Friedrich Gentz, to Friedrich Schlegel, a writer of the then ultramodern romantic school—these were a few of the more famous visitors at Rahel's "garret"—came to an end in 1806 when, according to their hostess, this unique meeting place "foundered like a ship containing the highest enjoyment of life." Along with the aristocrats, the romantic intellectuals became antisemitic, and although this by no means meant that either group gave up all its Jewish friends, the innocence and splendor were gone.

The real turning point in the social history of German Jews came not in the year of the Prussian defeat, but two years later, when, in 1808, the government passed the municipal law giving full civic, though not political, rights to the Jews. In the peace treaty of 1807, Prussia had lost with her eastern provinces the majority of her Jewish population; the Jews left within her territory were "protected Jews" in any event, that is, they already enjoyed civic rights in the form of individual privileges. The municipal emancipation only legalized these privileges, and outlived the general emancipation decree of 1812; Prussia, having regained Posen and its Jewish masses after the defeat of Napoleon, practically rescinded the decree of 1812, which now would have meant political rights even for poor Jews, but left the municipal law intact.

Though of little political importance so far as the actual improvement of the Jews' status is concerned, these final emancipation decrees together with the loss of the provinces in which the majority of Prussian Jews lived, had tremendous social consequences. Before 1807, the protected Jews of Prussia had numbered only about 20 per cent of the total Jewish population. By the time the emancipation decree was issued, protected Jews formed the majority in Prussia, with only 10 per cent of "foreign Jews" left for contrast. Now the dark poverty and backwardness against which "exception Jews" of wealth and education had stood out so advantageously was no longer

there. And this background, so essential as a basis of comparison for social success and psychological self-respect, never again became what it had been before Napoleon. When the Polish provinces were regained in 1816, the formerly "protected Jews" (now registered as Prussian citizens of Jewish faith) still numbered above 60 per cent.[14]

Socially speaking, this meant that the remaining Jews in Prussia had lost the native background against which they had been measured as exceptions. Now they themselves composed such a background, but a contracted one, against which the individual had to strain doubly in order to stand out at all. "Exception Jews" were once again simply Jews, not exceptions from but representatives of a despised people. Equally bad was the social influence of governmental interference. Not only the classes antagonistic to the government and therefore openly hostile to the Jews, but all strata of society, became more or less aware that Jews of their acquaintance were not so much individual exceptions as members of a group in whose favor the state was ready to take exceptional measures. And this was precisely what the "exception Jews" had always feared.

Berlin society left the Jewish salons with unmatched rapidity, and by 1808 these meeting-places had already been supplanted by the houses of the titled bureaucracy and the upper middle class. One can see, from any of the numerous correspondences of the time, that the intellectuals as well as the aristocrats now began to direct their contempt for the Eastern European Jews, whom they hardly knew, against the educated Jews of Berlin, whom they knew very well. The latter would never again achieve the self-respect that springs from a collective consciousness of being exceptional; henceforth, each one of them had to prove that although he was a Jew, yet he was not a Jew. No longer would it suffice to distinguish oneself from a more or less unknown mass of "backward brethren"; one had to stand out—as an individual who could be congratulated on being an exception—from *"the* Jew," and thus from the people as a whole.

Social discrimination, and not political antisemitism, discovered the phantom of *"the* Jew." The first author to make the distinction between the Jewish individual and "the Jew in general, the Jew everywhere and nowhere" was an obscure publicist who had, in 1802, written a biting satire on Jewish society and its hunger for education, the magic wand for general social acceptance. Jews were depicted as a "principle" of philistine and upstart society.[15] This rather vulgar piece of literature not only was read with delight by quite a few prominent members of Rahel's salon, but even indirectly inspired a great romantic poet, Clemens von Brentano, to write a

[14] See Heinrich Silbergleit, *Die Bevölkerungs- und Berufsverhältnisse der Juden im Deutschen Reich,* Vol. I, Berlin, 1930.

[15] C. W. F. Grattenauer's widely read pamphlet *Wider die Juden* of 1802 had been preceded as far back as 1791 by another, *Ueber die physische und moralische Verfassung der heutigen Juden* in which the growing influence of the Jews in Berlin was already pointed out. Although the early pamphlet was reviewed in the *Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek,* 1792, Vol. CXII, almost nobody ever read it.

very witty paper in which again the philistine was identified with the Jew.[16]

With the early idyll of a mixed society something disappeared which was never, in any other country and at any other time, to return. Never again did any social group accept Jews with a free mind and heart. It would be friendly with Jews either because it was excited by its own daring and "wickedness" or as a protest against making pariahs of fellow-citizens. But social pariahs the Jews did become wherever they had ceased to be political and civil outcasts.

It is important to bear in mind that assimilation as a group phenomenon really existed only among Jewish intellectuals. It is no accident that the first educated Jew, Moses Mendelssohn, was also the first who, despite his low civic status, was admitted to non-Jewish society. The court Jews and their successors, the Jewish bankers and businessmen in the West, were never socially acceptable, nor did they care to leave the very narrow limits of their invisible ghetto. In the beginning they were proud, like all unspoiled upstarts, of the dark background of misery and poverty from which they had risen; later, when they were attacked from all sides, they had a vested interest in the poverty and even backwardness of the masses because it became an argument, a token of their own security. Slowly, and with misgivings, they were forced away from the more rigorous demands of Jewish law—they never left religious traditions altogether—yet demanded all the more orthodoxy from the Jewish masses.[17] The dissolution of Jewish communal autonomy made them that much more eager not only to protect Jewish communities against the authorities, but also to rule over them with the help of the state, so that the phrase denoting the "double dependence" of poor Jews on "both the government and their wealthy brethren" only reflected reality.[18]

The Jewish notables (as they were called in the nineteenth century) ruled

[16] Clemens Brentano's *Der Philister vor, in und nach der Geschichte* was written for and read to the so-called *Christlich-Deutsche Tischgesellschaft,* a famous club of writers and patriots, founded in 1808 for the struggle against Napoleon.

[17] Thus the Rothschilds in the 1820's withdrew a large donation from their native community of Frankfurt, in order to counteract the influence of reformers who wanted Jewish children to receive a general education. See Isaak Markus Jost, *Neuere Geschichte der Israeliten,* 1846, X, 102.

[18] *Op. cit.,* IX, 38.—The court Jews and the rich Jewish bankers who followed in their footsteps never wanted to leave the Jewish community. They acted as its representatives and protectors against public authorities; they were frequently granted official power over communities which they ruled from afar so that the old autonomy of Jewish communities was undermined and destroyed from within long before it was abolished by the nation-state. The first court Jew with monarchical aspirations in his own "nation" was a Jew of Prague, a purveyor of supplies to the Elector Maurice of Saxony in the sixteenth century. He demanded that all rabbis and community heads be selected from members of his family. (See Bondy-Dworsky, *Geschichte der Juden in Boehmen, Maehren und Schlesien,* Prague, 1906, II, 727.) The practice of installing court Jews as dictators in their communities became general in the eighteenth century and was followed by the rule of "notables" in the nineteenth century.

the Jewish communities, but they did not belong to them socially or even geographically. They stood, in a sense, as far outside Jewish society as they did outside Gentile society. Having made brilliant individual careers and been granted considerable privileges by their masters, they formed a kind of community of exceptions with extremely limited social opportunities. Naturally despised by court society, lacking business connections with the non-Jewish middle class, their social contacts were as much outside the laws of society as their economic rise had been independent of contemporary economic conditions. This isolation and independence frequently gave them a feeling of power and pride, illustrated by the following anecdote told in the beginning eighteenth century: "A certain Jew . . . , when gently reproached by a noble and cultured physician with (the Jewish) pride although they had no princes among them and no part in government . . . replied with insolence: We are not princes, but we govern them." [19]

Such pride is almost the opposite of class arrogance, which developed but slowly among the privileged Jews. Ruling as absolute princes among their own people, they still felt themselves to be *primi inter pares.* They were prouder of being a "privileged Rabbi of all Jewry" or a "Prince of the Holy Land" than of any titles their masters might offer them.[20] Until the middle of the eighteenth century, they would all have agreed with the Dutch Jew who said: *"Neque in toto orbi alicui nationi inservimus,"* and neither then nor later would they have understood fully the answer of the "learned Christian" who replied: "But this means happiness only for a few. The people considered as a *corpo* (*sic*) is hunted everywhere, has no self-government, is subject to foreign rule, has no power and no dignity, and wanders all over the world, a stranger everywhere." [21]

Class arrogance came only when business connections were established among state bankers of different countries; intermarriage between leading families soon followed, and culminated in a real international caste system, unknown thus far in Jewish society. This was all the more glaring to non-Jewish observers, since it took place when the old feudal estates and castes were rapidly disappearing into new classes. One concluded, very wrongly, that the Jewish people were a remnant of the Middle Ages and did not see that this new caste was of quite recent birth. It was completed only in the nineteenth century and comprised numerically no more than perhaps a hundred families. But since these were in the limelight, the Jewish people as a whole came to be regarded as a caste.[22]

Great, therefore, as the role of the court Jews had been in political history and for the birth of antisemitism, social history might easily neglect

[19] Johann Jacob Schudt, *Jüdische Merkwürdigkeiten,* Frankfurt a.M., 1715-1717, IV, Annex, 48.

[20] Selma Stern, *Jud Suess,* Berlin, 1929, pp. 18 f.

[21] Schudt, *op. cit.,* I, 19.

[22] Christian Friedrich Ruehs defines the whole Jewish people as a "caste of merchants." "Ueber die Ansprüche der Juden an das deutsche Bürgerrecht," in *Zeitschrift für die neueste Geschichte,* 1815.

them were it not for the fact that they had certain psychological traits and behavior patterns in common with Jewish intellectuals who were, after all, usually the sons of businessmen. The Jewish notables wanted to dominate the Jewish people and therefore had no desire to leave it, while it was characteristic of Jewish intellectuals that they wanted to leave their people and be admitted to society; they both shared the feeling that they were exceptions, a feeling perfectly in harmony with the judgment of their environment. The "exception Jews" of wealth felt like exceptions from the common destiny of the Jewish people and were recognized by the governments as exceptionally useful; the "exception Jews" of education felt themselves exceptions from the Jewish people and also exceptional human beings, and were recognized as such by society.

Assimilation, whether carried to the extreme of conversion or not, never was a real menace to the survival of the Jews.[23] Whether they were welcomed or rejected, it was because they were Jews, and they were well aware of it. The first generations of educated Jews still wanted sincerely to lose their identity as Jews, and Boerne wrote with a great deal of bitterness, "Some reproach me with being a Jew, some praise me because of it, some pardon me for it, but all think of it." [24] Still brought up on eighteenth-century ideas, they longed for a country without either Christians or Jews; they had devoted themselves to science and the arts, and were greatly hurt when they found out that governments which would give every privilege and honor to a Jewish banker, condemned Jewish intellectuals to starvation.[25] The conversions which, in the early nineteenth century, had been prompted by fear of being lumped together with the Jewish masses, now became a necessity for daily bread. Such a premium on lack of character forced a whole generation of Jews into bitter opposition against state and society. The "new specimens of humanity," if they were worth their salt, all became rebels, and since the most reactionary governments of the period were supported and financed by Jewish bankers, their rebellion was especially violent against the official representatives of their own people. The anti-Jewish denunciations of Marx and Boerne cannot be properly understood except in the light of this conflict between rich Jews and Jewish intellectuals.

This conflict, however, existed in full vigor only in Germany and did not survive the antisemitic movement of the century. In Austria, there was no Jewish intelligentsia to speak of before the end of the nineteenth century,

[23] A remarkable, though little-known, fact is that assimilation as a program led much more frequently to conversion than to mixed marriage. Unfortunately statistics cover up rather than reveal this fact because they consider all unions between converted and nonconverted Jewish partners to be mixed marriages. We know, however, that there were quite a number of families in Germany who had been baptized for generations and yet remained purely Jewish. That the converted Jew only rarely left his family and even more rarely left his Jewish surroundings altogether, accounts for this. The Jewish family, at any rate, proved to be a more conserving force than Jewish religion.

[24] *Briefe aus Paris.* 74th Letter, February, 1832.

[25] *Ibid.*, 72nd Letter.

when it felt immediately the whole impact of antisemitic pressure. These Jews, like their wealthy brethren, preferred to trust themselves to the Hapsburg monarchy's protection, and became socialist only after the first World War, when the Social Democratic party came to power. The most significant, though not the only, exception to this rule was Karl Kraus, the last representative of the tradition of Heine, Boerne, and Marx. Kraus's denunciations of Jewish businessmen on one hand, and Jewish journalism as the organized cult of fame on the other, were perhaps even more bitter than those of his predecessors because he was so much more isolated in a country where no Jewish revolutionary tradition existed. In France, where the emancipation decree had survived all changes of governments and regimes, the small number of Jewish intellectuals were neither the forerunners of a new class nor especially important in intellectual life. Culture as such, education as a program, did not form Jewish behavior patterns as it did in Germany.

In no other country had there been anything like the short period of true assimilation so decisive for the history of German Jews, when the real vanguard of a people not only accepted Jews, but was even strangely eager to associate with them. Nor did this attitude ever completely disappear from German society. To the very end, traces of it could easily be discerned, which showed, of course, that relations with Jews never came to be taken for granted. At best it remained a program, at worst a strange and exciting experience. Bismarck's well-known remark about "German stallions to be paired off with Jewish mares," is but the most vulgar expression of a prevalent point of view.

It is only natural that this social situation, though it made rebels out of the first educated Jews, would in the long run produce a specific kind of conformism rather than an effective tradition of rebellion.[26] Conforming to a society which discriminated against "ordinary" Jews and in which, at the same time, it was generally easier for an educated Jew to be admitted to fashionable circles than for a non-Jew of similar condition, Jews had to differentiate themselves clearly from the "Jew in general," and just as clearly to indicate that they were Jews; under no circumstances were they allowed simply to disappear among their neighbors. In order to rationalize an ambiguity which they themselves did not fully understand, they might pretend to "be a man in the street and a Jew at home." [27] This actually amounted to a feeling of being different from other men in the street because they were Jews, and different from other Jews at home because they were not like "ordinary Jews."

[26] The "conscious pariah" (Bernard Lazare) was the only tradition of rebellion which established itself, although those who belonged to it were hardly aware of its existence. See the author's "The Jew as Pariah. A Hidden Tradition," in *Jewish Social Studies,* Vol. VI, No. 2 (1944).

[27] It is not without irony that this excellent formula, which may serve as a motto for Western European assimilation, was propounded by a Russian Jew and first published in Hebrew. It comes from Judah Leib Gordon's Hebrew poem, *Hakitzah ami,* 1863. See S. M. Dubnow, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland,* 1918, II, 228 f.

The behavior patterns of assimilated Jews, determined by this continuous concentrated effort to distinguish themselves, created a Jewish type that is recognizable everywhere. Instead of being defined by nationality or religion, Jews were being transformed into a social group whose members shared certain psychological attributes and reactions, the sum total of which was supposed to constitute "Jewishness." In other words, Judaism became a psychological quality and the Jewish question became an involved personal problem for every individual Jew.

In his tragic endeavor to conform through differentiation and distinction, the new Jewish type had as little in common with the feared "Jew in general" as with that abstraction, the "heir of the prophets and eternal promoter of justice on earth," which Jewish apologetics conjured up whenever a Jewish journalist was being attacked. The Jew of the apologists was endowed with attributes that are indeed the privileges of pariahs, and which certain Jewish rebels living on the fringe of society did possess—humanity, kindness, freedom from prejudice, sensitiveness to injustice. The trouble was that these qualities had nothing to do with the prophets and that, worse still, these Jews usually belonged neither to Jewish society nor to fashionable circles of non-Jewish society. In the history of assimilated Jewry, they played but an insignificant role. The "Jew in general," on the other hand, as described by professional Jew-haters, showed those qualities which the parvenu must acquire if he wants to arrive—inhumanity, greed, insolence, cringing servility, and determination to push ahead. The trouble in this case was that these qualities have also nothing to do with national attributes and that, moreover, these Jewish business-class types showed little inclination for non-Jewish society and played almost as small a part in Jewish social history. As long as defamed peoples and classes exist, parvenu- and pariah-qualities will be produced anew by each generation with incomparable monotony, in Jewish society and everywhere else.

For the formation of a social history of the Jews within nineteenth-century European society, it was, however, decisive that to a certain extent every Jew in every generation had somehow at some time to decide whether he would remain a pariah and stay out of society altogether, or become a parvenu, or conform to society on the demoralizing condition that he not so much hide his origin as "betray with the secret of his origin the secret of his people as well." [28] The latter road was difficult, indeed, as such secrets did not exist and had to be made up. Since Rahel Varnhagen's unique attempt to establish a social life outside of official society had failed, the way of the pariah and the parvenu were equally ways of extreme solitude, and the way of conformism one of constant regret. The so-called complex psychology of the average Jew, which in a few favored cases developed into a very modern sensitiveness, was based on an ambiguous situation. Jews felt simultaneously the pariah's regret at not having become a parvenu and the parvenu's bad conscience at having betrayed his people and exchanged equal rights for

[28] This formulation was made by Karl Kraus around 1912. See *Untergang der Welt durch schwarze Magie*, 1925.